

Denver Snuffer Podcast 170: Good Cheer, Part 3

This installment is titled Good Cheer, Part 3, where Denver discusses how we can be of good cheer even when the world around us seems to be getting darker.

DENVER: Take any event at any time, in the Book of Mormon for example. You have the family of Lehi and what went on there, or later in time during Alma and Abinadi in the courts of King Noah. Take any of those circumstances and ask yourself: Let's assume that that was happening today. Let's assume God was doing things today similar to what He was doing back then. What would that look like? How would that unfold? What would be said? What would the response be? How would you react to that if it were going on today? How would you decide if something like that were happening now, whether or not it was authentic and of God? How would you go about deciding that in your own day, in your own time, among your own people, within your own family, what is happening is of God and not of men?

I don't think that just because something gets enshrined in scripture we should lose sight of the fact that it has always required faith, it will always require faith, and it doesn't matter what proofs you can muster for or against belief in something. At the end of the day either God is behind it or God is not. And if God is behind it and your heart is open to it, you'll recognize it; you'll receive it.

The problem we have as people is we don't really believe the Book of Mormon. We believe in long ago and far way. The Book of Mormon is telling us, "Hey, Gentiles, among you, in your day, in your time, there are going to be things that God necessarily is going to have to accomplish." What would that look like? What would that unfold like? How would that come rolling forth? Many of the people about whom scriptures are written, and the pivotal moments in which choices have to be made before great things unfold, have remarkably humble beginnings, almost inconsequential, so much so that the biblical record entirely omits Lehi. So much so that the people chosen by the Lord to flee before the fall of Babylon, and to start a new civilization on the other side of the world, remained entirely obscure to the world from the moment they left Jerusalem until the time that the Book of Mormon rolled forth in 1830.

Lot chose to live in Sodom. What's up with Lot? Maybe they had good music. Maybe it was fashion. Maybe they had great art. (I'm pretty sure they had great performance art, I'm just not into that.) When Abraham went to recover his nephew and the angels came and Lot bargained, it wasn't Abraham who was out to destroy the wicked, and it wasn't Lot that was out to destroy the wicked, it was the Lord. The Lord is going to take care of the abominations that are out there. Our responsibility is to invite people to see a better way, to conceive of a higher and more noble way to live life. Our job isn't to rebuke and condemn and to belittle.

There are really two forces at work in all of creation. One force is generative, creative, and positive. It fabricates new things. It is ongoingly surprising and life-filled and wonderful. What's opposed to that are the forces of degeneration, decay, negativity, entropy, destruction. There isn't enough being done in order to bring that positivity, that creativity, that newness into this world. Even though children are born every day, and life starts over all new again with the birth of every new child, our minds are preoccupied by the forces of negativity and what opposes us. I could spend all day every day responding to negative arguments and negative comments, and if I were to do that I wouldn't get anything new done, covered, accomplished, or out there.

When we take a message out to people about the restoration of the Gospel, the work of Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, the offering of the Covenant, the expected coming Zion, there is no reason to deal with the criticism. It's going to collapse on its own. Here's a great bit of advice: If the criticism level would condemn Jesus Christ, then the criticism is the problem, not the object of the criticism.

Now understand, (this is secondhand, because I don't go there and do this) but my wife informed me that in some Facebook group there was complaining about the Prayer for the Covenant because that was "praying for to be seen of men." It's public. Okay, when Jesus taught us to pray, "*Our Father who art in heaven*", he did it publicly. It got reduced to writing. It's the most widely read prayer in all of western society. So if you are going to condemn, on that basis, the Prayer for the Covenant, you are going to have to condemn the Lord's Prayer and in turn condemn the Lord. If you can resolve criticism leveled at you by applying the test and saying, "Jesus would have failed that test, too," then you don't even need to respond to the criticism. But if they level criticism at you, and you look at it say, "Jesus would have passed that and I would fail," then it's time to start saying, "Well, okay, then I need to clean up something in my own life." Because all of us deserve some level, we merit some level, of criticism and condemnation. We're just not perfect.

It's really hard to sit inside your own life and be realistic about your own personal failings. We always tend to apply tests that are given in scripture outwardly and to say, "As long as I use persuasion and pure knowledge then I can beat you into submission and never yield the argument because I am doing what was said is the criteria." Gentleness—okay, I won't yell at you. Meekness—okay, I'll be polite enough to let you say what you have to say, I won't interrupt. Love unfeigned—okay, I love ya brother, *I LOVE ya brother*. Persuasion—okay, when I get my opportunity to present mine I'm going for the brass ring.

Wait a minute. What if that's God trying to get through to you? What if the way in which God is trying to persuade you is by the meekness of the humble Lord who speaks to us in plain humility; who comes to us, not to try and overawe us, but comes to us saying: "*You are me in embryo. I know what it took for me to become the Son of God, and I know you can do it, too.*" What if the Lord is your greatest cheerleader, and he wants nothing more than to try and get you to be more like Him. You can't be more like Him when the center of everything is yourself and you never self-examine. We all deserve criticism.

I was asked if I would bear my testimony and I'm willing to do that. I've tried to let people know exactly what has and is going on without the need of resorting to a lot of spectacular descriptions of the Lord's direct involvement in my life.

I want you to imagine for a moment: Moses is on the mount. The setting is awesome. The Lord is speaking to him, and in that setting he is overawed, so much so that when the Spirit of the Lord withdraws, he collapses because it has drained all his strength. He comes to himself and realizes man is nothing and he'd never supposed that. The adversary comes to tempt him. He can tell the difference between a merely pretentious soul whose message is dark, and the God of glory whose message is Light. And then the God of glory comes again and presents to him yet more. This is a spectacular event. He is told: "Take your stick, go to Pharaoh's court, throw your stick down and we'll humble the Pharaoh."

Now you've probably got—by the time you walk down the mountain, and you get ready and provisioned and make arrangements for your affairs while you are gone—days before you set off for Egypt. And then when you travel to Egypt, you've probably got a couple of weeks or more of hard trudging across the desert. You arrive in Egypt and you realize, kind of like God, the pylons of Egypt are awesome. They represent a false religion but they do so impressively. You come, with your shepherd's sandals and your homespun garments, into the courts of Pharaoh where you are supposed to deliver a message. You tell me that no matter how spectacular the circumstances were on Sinai some three weeks earlier that it didn't take faith for Moses to confront the Pharaoh and to deliver the message. As the sound of the staff is rattling into a stable position on the floor of the courts of Pharaoh, I suspect Moses was palpitating. *"I sure hope He's God here, too!"* Because everyone thought that gods were local. Everyone thought that gods were from different districts. Sinai may have been Jehovah's. Ra, Fa, who is big cheese here? I can imagine that for a moment Moses held his breath, hoping.

We sit back from our distance with the confidence that this was going to play through triumphantly, and it was going to work out just exactly as the story always works out. Moses had absolutely no such assurance. He was sent out to do, what may be to him humiliating and embarrassing things to do and to say, but he did them anyway. Not because he knew he would triumph and history would remember him. He did them because God told him to and he really, really, hoped it was going to work out.

I don't know how often it is, that no matter what I've been shown or given, taught or received, that I realize, that at the end of the day, the only proof anyone will have will be the words that I get told to deliver. From my perspective it's like...the stick rattling on the floor as it settles there, while you swallow hard and you hope that there are at least some who have hearts that are receptive, who are willing to say, "God spoke unto the Fathers in times past, and has spoken unto us by His Son, and again spoken unto us by Joseph, and God speaks again today."

It's not Joseph, it's not Moses, it's the One behind that. It's the God of Heaven and His Son. It's the only sound, reliable, and true thing that there is in the universe, and *that* God speaks again. However unlikely it may seem in the circumstances, God speaks again.

There will come a time when there will be people among whom it will not be necessary to say, "*Know ye the Lord,*" because everyone is going to know Him. What He will put us through to get from here to there is up to Him to determine. And how He is going to accomplish that is up to Him to decide. But when we get there and the Lord is among us, none of us are going to be surprised. None of us are going to dance around excitedly because we are going to say, "We knew He was with us every step of the way anyway." It will be ever so nice to come and embrace, and to feel wounds, and to kneel, but you won't be surprised.

What it takes to get us from where we are to that point is entirely individual. It's entirely up to every single one of us. But He's willing to take us on that journey and He's willing to put us through the forge, and melt us until we are pliable, and hammer us until we are shaped. He is willing to put us through what's required in order to take people and turn them into something that is far more like Him and far less like the world.

The culmination of the ages will require us all to face the conflicts, the unease, anxiety, or what Jesus described as "the distress of nations, with perplexity." (NC Luke 12:17). The paradoxes and perplexities will require us all to charge ahead, like Job's horse to the battle. A final conflict may still be comparatively afar, but it is coming. It can be seen in the news, media, politics and society of our day. It creeps ever closer, and is even now only held at bay by the providence of heaven. This is a time to prepare. We are now in a season to reclaim and restore incomplete gospel understanding. These are precious moments and need to be well spent. We need to gallop into the clash of arms, and devour the remaining distance with the fierceness and rage of a committed heart determined to defy the idolatry and foolishness of our vain age. Stand fast in the truth. Defend yourself with knowledge. Knowledge of the truth comes from above and fortifies the soul with light and truth.

Social media makes minds weak, hearts faint, and fills a person with vanity and foolishness. It should not be embraced but relegated to the insignificance it deserves. The fabric of the electronic world consists of widespread opinions based on misinformation and lies. These are accepted as truth or proof in our day. Those who are most engaged in social media are the most prone to believe in lies. Social media can cause emotional and mental deficiencies. Turn from it.

Political leaders do not want to solve problems; they want to preserve them so they can falsely promise to find an answer one day. They need problems to support their craft. But if an actual leader labors to solve a problem, it threatens the lying craft of the political class. The politicians of our day need persistent problems to motivate voters to give them authority and uphold them in their ambition. Do not be fooled. Our deliverance will never come from Washington or any other nation's capital.

Still, in almost every measurable way, the world is in a better state today than at any other time in history. Manufacturing can produce more useful things all throughout the world. We can grow more food, transport more material, produce more energy and create more wealth than any prior generation. But there is a great threat hanging over it all that can

destroy every part of it – the lies and madness of deluded mankind. The contention, anger and hatred that dominate daily conversation have stirred up the world to anger. “For the kingdom of the Devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance or the Devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains and they be stirred up to anger and perish. For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men and stir them up to anger against that which is good.” (NC 2 Ne. 12:4).

Do not be angry with anyone, but certainly not with one another. Nearly all of the violence described in the Book of Mormon came because of anger. Christ condemned this. “Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger one against another, but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.” (NC 3 Ne. 5:8).

There will be no deliverance by any government, church or institution operated by men. The pitiful arm of man is nothing compared with the arm of God. The Lord is the creator of this world, and He gave dominion over His creation to Adam. Adam still presides, and the original order set up in the beginning will return before Christ comes to take back His creation. His kingdom is coming. Accomplishing what needs to be done before His return will make us subjects to the Divine King.

Skills are needed. Learn useful things to help preserve order and comfort. Agriculture, metallurgy, medicine, mechanics, construction, engineering, hydraulics, husbandry, and every practical skill will benefit God’s kingdom. So will literature, music, art and humanities. Society needs to have fire to cook, and fire in our hearts to make life whole. Learn all the useful knowledge the world can offer, and remember that knowledge of God is more valuable than it all.

The Apostle Paul is credited with being the Father of the Protestant Reformation. His words about “grace” were used to re-conceive man’s salvation. Martin Luther saw in Paul’s words the possibility of salvation by grace, separate from institutional authority and control.

At the time when Jesus Christ had living officials administering rites of the gospel, Paul was able to wrestle from heaven a dispensation. Using that dispensation, Paul became a dispensation head who did more, worked harder, and labored more abundantly in ministering to Christ’s sheep and spreading the gospel than any other man we know of. Paul was not jealous of the others who knew Christ and had been called by Him to the ministry. But there is some evidence of fear and jealousy towards Paul for his success in obtaining an independent dispensation of the gospel.

Paul explained his diligence in spreading the gospel:

[I]n labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft; of the Jews, five times received I forty save one; three times was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; three times I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; journeyings often, perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils by countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brethren; in weariness and labor, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and

nakedness; beside those things that are outside, that which comes upon me daily, the care of all the churches. (NC 2 Cor. 1:39).

Despite the opposition Paul experienced among believers and non-believers alike, he remained of a cheery disposition. "... I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content." (NC Phil. 1:6).

It is this kind of contentment that should be seen among people today. When God's people are stirred to anger with each other, then even God is against them. After the spot for a temple in Missouri was revealed, the people who went there polluted it by their jealousies and fighting. The unbelieving Missourians were used by God to expel them from the place they had hoped to build a temple. They were surprised the holy spot could be taken from them. After it was taken God explained why:

Verily I say unto you, concerning your brethren who have been afflicted and persecuted and cast out from the land of their inheritances, I the Lord have suffered the affliction to come upon them wherewith they have been afflicted, in consequence of their transgressions, yet I will own them, and they shall be mine in that day when I shall come to make up my jewels. Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son, for all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified. Behold, I say unto you, There were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them, therefore, by these things they polluted their inheritances. They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God, therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble. In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel, but in the day of their trouble, of necessity, they feel after me. (NC T&C 101:1-2.)

If the covenant with God is kept, then He will allow His house to be built. The covenant cannot be kept if there is jarring, contention, envy, strife, lustful and covetous desires. If we do the same as those who went before, we would pollute the ground again. I am thankful we do not yet have a place to pollute. It would be better to never gain a promised place for God's house than to take possession and pollute it.

The content Apostle Paul taught the believers of his day:

Let your consecrations be without covetousness, and be content with giving such things as you have; for he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Heb. 1:58 RE)

Alma taught a lesson that we accepted by covenant as a statement of our faith:

And now my beloved brethren, I have said these things unto you that I might awaken you to a sense of your duty to God, that ye may walk blameless before

him, that ye may walk after the holy order of God after which ye have been received. And now I would that ye should be humble and be submissive and gentle, easy to be entreated, full of patience and longsuffering, being temperate in all things, being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times, asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal, always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive. (Alma 5:6 RE)

The greatness of a soul is defined by how easily they are entreated to follow the truth. The greatest of those who have ever lived have been submissive and gentle souls. In a day when Satan accuses and rages in the hearts of men, it requires extraordinary will and steely determination to remain easily entreated by truth.

In a letter written in July 1840 Joseph explained:

In order to conduct the affairs of the kingdom in righteousness it is all important, that the most perfect harmony kind feeling, good understanding and confidence should exist in the hearts of all the brethren. And that true Charity—love one towards one another, should characterize all their proceedings. If there are any uncharitable feelings, any lack of confidence, then pride and arrogancy and envy will soon be manifested and confusion must inevitably prevail... (JSP Documents Vol. 7, p. 362, as in original.)

In that same letter Joseph said he wished the people would progress, but did not see that possible until a different spirit led them:

It would be gratifying to my mind to see the saints in Kirtland flourish, but think the time has not yet come and I assure you it never will until a different order of things be established and a different spirit be manifested. (JSP Documents Vol. 7, p. 363.)

It is in consequence of aspiring men that Kirtland has been forsaken. (JSP Documents Vol. 7, p. 364.)

After nearly a half-year of imprisonment, Joseph described the importance of a calm mind in order to hear the still small voice of God. His mind was afire with all the distractions of being in prison, and his family and friends expelled from Missouri at gunpoint. Friends had been killed. Church members had betrayed him. God spoke to Joseph when he freed his mind of these concerns and quietly pondered, opening himself up to inspiration.

Learn from these words Joseph wrote while in Liberty Jail about how to set aside all that distracts us to hear God's voice:

We received some letters last evening: one from Emma, one from Don C[arlos] Smith, and one from bishop Partridge, all breathing a kind and consoling spirit. We were much gratified with their contents. We had been a long time without information, and when we read those letters, they were to our souls as the gentle air is refreshing. But our joy was mingled with grief because of the

suffering of the poor and much injured saints, and we need not say to you that the floodgates of our hearts were hoisted, and our eyes were a fountain of tears. But those who have not been enclosed in the walls of a prison without cause or provocation can have but a little idea how sweet the voice of a friend is. One token of friendship from any source whatever awakens and calls into action every sympathetic feeling. It brings up in an instant everything that is passed. It seizes the present with a vivacity of lightning. It grasps after the future with the fierceness of a tiger. It retrogrades from one thing to another, until finally all enmity, malice, and hatred, and past differences, misunderstandings, and mismanagements, lie slain victims at the feet of hope. And when the heart is sufficiently contrite, then the Voice of inspiration steals along and whispers, My son, peace be unto your soul, your adversity and your afflictions shall be but a small moment, and then, if you endure it well, God shall exalt you on high[.] (T&C 138:11).

This world is a place of trial and testing. Before creation it was planned that when we came here we would be “proven” by what we experience. That happens now. Prove yourself by listening to God, hearing His voice, and obeying. Sometimes we are like Alma and want to do greater things to help God’s work, but the greatest work of all is to respond to God’s voice and prove you are willing to listen and obey Him.

Exaltation results in remarkable diversity. The Creator has never in this Creation made two people that are the same. There are no two snowflakes that are the same. If God goes to all the trouble of making unique snowflakes—all of which are patterned after the same crystalline structure, and yet, no two of them are alike—then why would God expect **that** kind of uniformity? Now, set that on one side for a moment, and...

A lot of disagreements that exist between people are based upon their background, education, and experience, okay? If all of us read the same library, if all of us grew up in the same household, if all of us had the same basic education, shared the same friends, went through the same kind of socio-economic experiences, if all of us shared all of those things, there would be a whole lot of disagreements that would go away, and we would find ourselves agreeing on a whole lot more than we agree on now.

However, we would still disagree with one another. We would still find differences of opinion. We would still find ourselves really preferring different hues and shades, and you would buy an ugly-colored car, and I would buy a beautiful-colored car, and I would be so glad I wasn’t driving that ugly thing you’re driving around in. (But we would certainly all have four-wheel drive pickups; they just wouldn’t have the same color.)

Christ’s experiences completed a circuit that attained to the resurrection, that took him through an experience that allowed Him to attain to the resurrection of the dead. But after that experience was over—you can read it in the Teachings and Commandments—following that, the Lord was **absolutely exultant**, as was Mary when she met Him on the morning of the resurrection—never saw a happier being more so than the Lord on the morning of the resurrection. How He coped with that feeling and how you will cope with that feeling eventually and how all of us will cope with that will be uniquely experiential,

uniquely yours, uniquely His. Even the same experiences are gonna lead to differences. No one is going to be uniform except in education, background, experience, knowledge; but their attitudes are gonna be uniquely yours, uniquely his, uniquely hers. It's all gonna be different.

One of the ways in which we develop in community is by sharing in fellowships, contributing tithing in order to relieve people's basic needs (shelter, food, education, medical care, transportation) **and**, when you are a person in need, **receiving** that. And in that dynamic, the giver needs to do it cheerfully (and that requires some amount of learning), and the receiver needs to do so cheerfully. And no one should think of themselves as "better than" and no one should think of themselves as "less than"—because we tend to develop unhealthy attitudes.

Fellowships in which tithing gets used locally is a vivid example of how resentments or jealousies or insecurities and feelings of inferiority can develop. And we're supposed to interact with one another in a way that puts that on display **to you, internally**, so that you can reflect upon **why** you're feeling that and whether that is godly or ungodly.

We have to cooperate with helping one another because there are all kinds of needs. There are people who are socially retarded, in that they're obnoxious, they're overbearing... They need to come to realize that, in some respects, that's ungodly. And then there are people who **notice** that someone is obnoxious and overbearing, and they need to come to grips with the fact that that too is ungodly. Because in a perfect society, everyone's inadequacies are accepted and noticed by **that** person, and tolerated and endured by the others, as **they work through their deficiency**.

The New Jerusalem is to be built by a remnant of Israel, or to be more precise, it will be built by a remnant the Lord regards **as** covenant Israel. The Lord's "Answer to the Prayer for Covenant" accepted a body of believing Gentiles as His people of Israel. God's promises and prophecies about Israel in the last days began to be fulfilled in 2017 when the covenant He offered was accepted. The Lord said to those people:

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 [to] those who will receive [more will] be given, until they know the mysteries of God in full. ...I have redeemed you from being orphaned and taken you that you are no longer a widowed people. (T&C 157:50, emphasis added)

The Gentiles who accepted the Lord's Covenant have been promised that they:

...are now numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel...

God's Answer goes on to assure covenant Israel:

And I, the Lord your God, will be with you and will never forsake you, and I will lead you in the path which will bring peace to you in the troubling season now fast approaching.

I will raise you up and protect you, abide with you, and gather you in due time, and this shall be a land of promise to you as your inheritance from me.

The earth will yield its increase, and you will flourish upon the mountains and upon the hills, and the wicked will not come against you because the fear of the Lord will be with you.

*I will visit my house, which the remnant of my people shall build, and I will dwell therein, to be among you, and no one will need...say, Know ye the Lord, for you [shall **all**] know me, from the least to the greatest.*

I will teach you things that have been hidden from the foundation of the world and your understanding will reach unto Heaven.

And you shall be called the children of the Most High God, and I will preserve you against the harvest.

*And the angels sent to harvest the world will gather the wicked into bundles to be burned, but will **pass over you** as my peculiar treasure... (T&C 158:10,12-18, emphasis added)*

...a second **literal** Passover.

The Lord's "strange act" is approaching completion. The promises made to the Fathers are **being** vindicated. The Restoration has recommenced, and if we're faithful, it will not be paused or interrupted again. Although Israel's numbers are few, there have never been great numbers willing to sacrifice everything for God. One requirement for faith has always been the same: *A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation* (Lectures on Faith 6:7 RE). The Lord has said this about our day: *I tell you that [I] will come, and when [I do] come, [I] will avenge my saints speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, shall [I] find faith on the earth?* (Luke 10:6 RE).

There are two groups God has (or will) covenant to preserve against the coming harvest.

- The first are those who made and keep the covenant the Lord offered in 2017. It changed all those who accepted it into covenant Israel. **They** have the right to inherit this land and will be preserved. As stated in His "Answer to Prayer for Covenant": *And the angels sent to harvest the world will gather the wicked into bundles to be burned, but will pass over you as my peculiar treasure* (T&C 158:18).
- The second are those who will become part of the Holy Order and receive and practice the religion of the Fathers. God alone will decide **how many** and **who** will be invited into **that** order. We have no control over it. We have no right to decide who is worthy or unworthy to receive it. It is entirely the Lord's choice because we are **rarely** able to determine other people's hearts. The Lord told Joseph Smith **bluntly** that he was unable to tell the righteous from the wicked. We are in no better position than was Joseph. Therefore, we should leave it with the Lord to determine

whether or not to invite men and women and, if so, **who** and **how many**. The Holy Order is as much—or more—a burden as a blessing.

The Egyptian imitation of the Patriarchal religion kept hidden the most important parts of their religion away from public disclosure. Hugh Nibley explained:

Bleeker duly notes that “certain parts of temples were inaccessible to ordinary people” and that “the Egyptian temple was not meant to let the masses of the people participate in the religious services.” (*The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, p. 86, citing CJ Bleeker)

This was because:

The rites, “revealed to men by Osiris, the first mortal to be resurrected,” were nothing less than the “Great Secret” of how mortals may become gods, taught in the temple “the place of the great secret.” (*Ibid.* p. 88, citing A Moret)

Margaret Barker explained the Christian tradition of restricting information available **even to the faithful**. She likened the early Christian practice of concealing some truths from believers by referring to Origen’s *Homily 5 on Numbers*, explaining:

...the secrets of the temple which were guarded by the priests. Commenting on Numbers 4, the instructions for transporting the tabernacle through the desert, he emphasized that the family of Kohath were only permitted to carry the sacred objects but were not permitted to see what was in the holy place; then they had to cover the sacred objects with veils before handling them to others, who were only permitted to carry them. The mysteries of the Church were similar.... (*The Great High Priest*, pp.76-77)

Clement of Rome recorded that Peter quoted an unwritten teaching of Christ that admonished: “Keep the mysteries/secrets for me and the sons of my house” (*Clementine Homilies* 19:20). The resurrected Messiah taught His closest peers things that were **not** told to other believers.

Knowing God’s plans does not always produce immediate joy. Solomon made this comment after a life of learning: *In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow* (Ecclesiastes 1:3 RE). We should not be surprised to learn that initiation into God’s mysteries can be troubling, disquieting, and even a burden.

If asked to carry a burden by God, do it willingly. If not asked, do not envy. Remember Alma’s statement: *Behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish, for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me* (Alma 15:12 RE). It is our common enemy who stirs us up to jealousy and envy rather than patience and meekness. Great works of God **fail because mankind will not wait on the Lord**.

Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen, and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are [so set] upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson — that the rights of the Priesthood are

*inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and that the Powers of Heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness. ...when we undertake to cover our sins or...gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men in **any** degree of unrighteousness, behold, the Heavens withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. (T&C 139:5, emphasis added)*

The more God gives, the greater the peril. Weaknesses of appetites, ambitions, passions, and covetousness is akin to trying to navigate through a narrow pass, guarded by a great beast, pitiless and cruel, that destroys **all** those whose zeal and impatience brings them into the reach of the beast (see T&C 163). God has provided to us guidance on how to reach Zion. It requires self-discipline and meekness to follow the Lord rather than racing ahead of Him to destruction.

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 excerpts were taken from:

- Denver's comments at the "Unity in Christ" conference in Utah County, UT on July 30, 2017
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #3 given in Atlanta, Georgia on November 16, 2017
- Denver's remarks titled "Keep the Covenant: Do the Work" given at the Remembering the Covenants Conference in Layton, UT on September 30, 2018
- Denver's talk titled "Understanding Your Soul, Part 2," delivered in Highland, Utah on March 6, 2021
- Denver's general conference talk titled "Religion of the Fathers," presented at Aravada, Nevada on March 27, 2021; and

- His Opening Remarks given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, Idaho on September 3rd, 2017