

Talk given September 12th, 2010

Revelation

Revelation is defined as the act of revealing or disclosing; disclosure. In True to the Faith, it is defined, “Communication from God to His children. This guidance comes through various channels according to the needs and circumstances of individuals, families, and the church as a whole.”

Why is revelation so important? Joseph Smith said, “Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it.” There are many people in this world who would have you believe that the ability for an individual today to receive personal revelation is impossible. They would perhaps take that a step further, and say that only a devil would claim to receive personal revelation. However, revelation is entitled to each humble soul with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

Constantly throughout our lives, we should each seek personal revelation in the things that we do. But how do you receive this gift? I remember my first time praying, trying to receive an answer...I had no idea what I was doing. I knelt down and asked something...and just kinda waited like, “oh, this is dumb.” A few seconds went by and I gave up. I wondered why nothing had happened, but I wasn’t too concerned with it at the time. Then a short amount of time later in my life, I found myself greatly humbled and greatly pained, and I knelt down in prayer once more asking a question. I asked my Heavenly Father from the depth of my heart, “Do you love me?”

I had never felt an answer to prayer before this, and it is rare even today that I will feel an answer so perfectly strong. As I knelt there late that night, the Spirit filled my troubled soul with peace, love, and humility more than I could ever explain. I was certainly not in a place where I would expect to receive revelation, but the Lord saw fit to tell me that He loved me, I just had to ask first.

A servant of the Lord taught, “You need to seek and receive personal revelation through the Holy Ghost.” He continues a moment later, “Have faith that you will receive personal revelation to guide you from day to day. The Holy Ghost will help you in every aspect of your work” (Preach My Gospel 90).

I heard that and I was kind of overwhelmed. I knew I wasn’t very good at receiving revelation. But I decided that it was something that I needed in my life. Each night I began to tell my Heavenly Father what I felt I needed to work on for the next day, then I would ask what He thought I needed to work on, to strive to do better the next day. This helped me grow continuously for some time, and I became more and more familiar with the voice of the Lord.

Ezra Taft Benson taught the following, “The Lord will increase our knowledge, wisdom, and capacity to obey when we obey His fundamental laws. This is what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said we could have ‘sudden strokes of ideas’ which come into our minds as ‘pure intelligence.’...This is revelation. We must learn to rely on the Holy Ghost so we can use it to guide our lives and the lives of those for whom we have responsibility.”

So, you go home from church today and you have decided that you are going to seek personal revelation. It is very simple. The Lord teaches us in Doctrine and Covenants 9:7-9, “Behold, you have

not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.” The Lord would not simply give something to us if we didn’t ask for it. He knows that if we do seek and ask Him, then we learn and grow closer to Him. It is how things are meant to be, and as we continuously ask for things pertaining to building the kingdom of God, He will grant them to us and we will become more Christ like.

The Lord continues and says in verses 8 and 9, “But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.”

He is teaching us how to feel it, what to look for. Now revelation comes by different means to each of us. But just a chapter before this counsel, he teaches, “Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation; behold, this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red sea on dry ground” (D&C 8:2-3).

We have the privilege of that Spirit; the exact one, with the same power as the one who parted the sea. At times it can be difficult to understand what the Lord is trying to get us to know or understand; faith is required. Marion G. Romney taught, “We must study our problems and prayerfully make a decision, then take that decision and say to the Father, in simple, honest supplication, ‘Father, I want to make the right decision. I want to do the right thing. This is what I think I should do; let me know if it is the right course.’ By doing this, we can get the burning in our bosom, if our decision is right. If we do not get the burning, then we must change our decision and submit a new one. When we learn to walk by the Spirit, we never need to make a mistake.”

What a powerful promise: “When we learn to walk by the Spirit, we never need to make a mistake.” There was a young man and he loved serving the Lord. This young man took every opportunity that he could to serve, because he loved helping people, he loved following the Spirit, and he loved coming closer to Christ. This man realized that his life was going unusually well. It is not because there were no temptations, or troubling things in his life. There were those things in his life, very prominently conveying their evil in his life. But still...this man’s life was just about perfect. He learned that the only times when he felt down, or when he really felt he made a mistake...was when he rebelliously disobeyed the Spirit.

I believe that it is important to hearken to the voice of the Lord for many reasons. Not only does it have a profound impact on the individual who diligently seeks revelation and faithfully follows once it is given; but it is also a responsibility that each of us have as members of the church. Neal A. Maxwell, an apostle of God taught, “Perhaps our first mistake is to think that we own ourselves and also blocks of time. Of course, we have our agency and an inner sovereignty, but disciples are to sacrifice themselves to do Jesus’ bidding with enough faith in God’s timing to say, in effect, ‘Thy timing be done.’

Now, what exactly does that mean...Thy timing be done? Picture this, a twelve year old boy wakes up one morning and decides he is not afraid of girls anymore, now all of a sudden he really wants a wife. So he rolls out of bed with a new mind set and gets onto his knees and starts praying, “Father in Heaven,

please help me to find a wonderful wife today that will be perfect for me for all of Eternity. I really want a wife and I think I'm ready for one, I mean...I know what girls are like and everything and I know I don't need to wait a few years. So I am going to go find one. Please help me know where to go, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

The Lord heard this boy's prayer, and probably smiled from Heaven knowing that this boy's prayer will one day be answered, but regardless of the boy's perspective, the Lord is not ready for this boy to be married. Imagine this boy, he went through the whole day...and didn't find a wife. He comes back and gets on his knees and says, "Why didn't you help me find a wife?"

This is a perfectly clear analogy of something that happens so frequently in a more subtle way. Often times we ask for things, and we may not receive them, or even receive an answer to question until years later. It is our duty to trust in the Lord, His ability to help us, and His timing. The Lord is our Father and He loves us. In addition to those two facts, He also knows everything there is to know, every thought ever thought, every name of every child, and everything in the future...He knows all. And on occasion we have the nerve to say, "Hey...why are you doing this, I need this now?" Now, I doubt that any of us would be that disrespectful when speaking to our Father, but on occasion, we are delivering a similar message. When we fully understand our relationship with God, we will never question Him in such a manner, but rather faithfully submit to His will perhaps not knowing why.

There are several principles that I would like to touch on today regarding personal revelation, and how to receive it. The first is to be humble. A moment ago I spoke about trusting in the Lord, when we are humble we acknowledge His hand working and we recognize our dependence on Him. Moroni teaches,

"Because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love" (Moroni 8:26).

The next principle is to keep the commandments which the Lord had given to you. In the Sacramental prayer we learn that if we always remember Jesus Christ, and to take His name upon us, and to keep His commandments, then His Spirit will always be with us. This is a covenant that we made with our Heavenly Father. He promises us that if we are obedient then the Holy Ghost can be a constant and true companion to us. D&C 63:23 says,

"Unto him that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life." This is another promise from the Lord that requires us to first keep His commandments.

The next principle is to partake of the sacrament worthily. A moment ago I briefly taught the promises in the Sacramental prayers, but why is it important that we are worthy? If we partake of the Sacrament unworthily, it would have been better if we had not partaken at all. The Sacrament is there to cleanse us, but if we knowingly partake of it unworthily, we are only condemning our souls. In addition to that, the promises of this covenant are only in affect and therefore beneficial if we are first in accordance with God's commandments...humble, obedient, and repentant.

Another primary principle regarding personal revelation is the studying the scriptures. We must be diligent in scripture study, searching them each day fervently and prayerfully. I am not talking about reading one chapter each night when we are half asleep, can't keep our eyes open and thinking about how tired we are; but actually studying.

A principle that True to the Faith mentions is taking time to ponder. When we ponder the principles and truths of the Gospel, our minds and hearts are opened to the promptings of the Spirit. When we take time to ponder, truths will be revealed to us that would not have been revealed otherwise. We have to want it! If you want revelation...it will take work. Don't think that you can say a 30 second prayer in the morning and expect to receive a multitude of revelatory answers...It will not happen. Richard G. Scott said,

"Since it requires much personal effort to gain and use worthwhile knowledge, you cannot endlessly sample from every fascinating arena of life. Therefore, you should select carefully a few vital areas where you can focus energy to learn and share vital truths. I know that to gain knowledge of great worth requires extraordinary personal effort. This is particularly true when our desire is to obtain spiritual knowledge."

We have to want it! Otherwise we will not receive it. Constantly and consistently throughout the scriptures prophets proclaim, "Ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you." I testify that this is true. I have learned of the divinity of this simple principle from experience, from humbling myself before my Creator and asking with a sincere heart and with real intent. President Kimble taught the following,

"The treasures of both secular and spiritual knowledge are hidden ones—but hidden from those who do not properly search and strive to find them. ... Spiritual knowledge is not available merely for the asking; even prayers are not enough. It takes persistence and dedication of one's life. ... Of all treasures of knowledge, the most vital is the knowledge of God."

As we ponder the words of the scriptures, let them sink into our hearts, we will be taken away from the trivial cares of the world and into a realm where miracles can happen, where the Lord is. He always wants to help us, always wants to be with us, always wants us to learn and to grow...but we have to want it. We need to look at our lives in a different perspective, and ask ourselves, "What do I want to get out of this life?" As baptized members of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ himself, we are entitled to personal revelation and a constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. Each week as we renew our covenants that we made at baptism, each week as we strive to live worthily, each day as we diligently endeavor to be better than the day before, and each day when we humbly kneel in prayer we should say, "Father, Thy will be done." How important are the little things in this life? I want to save my money for a nice computer; others spend their time playing video games, watching sports, or any sort of television...WHY?! Those things do not matter! Video games are fun, watching sports is fun, tv can be good and relaxing, but when anything becomes an addiction it takes away from our ability to feel and comprehend the tender promptings of the Holy Spirit of God. So we need to ask ourselves, "What do I want to get out of this life?"

I urge you to take time to ponder, be receptive to the loving Father in Heaven who wants to help you, seek and ye shall find.

The final principle I will mention today in regards to personal revelation is this, "Seek God's will, and do it patiently." I frequently find myself praying for specific things, things that are righteous desires, and I don't understand why I receive the answers that come. I think that my way is better because it can just seem so clear...then when I pray about it, there are times when I just get confused. Why is this? I like to think of it like a big old quilt. So...this master quilter is making this huge quilt; let's say that we can only

see the bottom of it. From the bottom...I don't really understand, I see these absolutely hideous colors going into this blanket. I see this puke green, and some nasty browns, a few neon blues thrown in with the nasty browns, and then with random tinges of every color imaginable. I am sitting there on the other side of this quilt thinking, "Alright, well...I sure hope this guy knows what he is doing, I'll trust him."

In this situation, two things can be done...I can ask why he is doing it, so I can understand. Or I can just sit there confused until one day...I will finally see the top of the quilt and vaguely understand how it all came together. Life...is unpredictable, unexpected, difficult and full of surprises...to us. Our Heavenly Father knows exactly what is going on, and we can have knowledge of eternal principles if we simply seek. We must search for answers, pray for revelation daily, and live worthily to receive. When you do not receive an answer immediately, or not the one that you expected...be patient and have faith; He knows exactly what is going on.

Think about the brother of Jared, he went and inquired of the Lord. Because of his exceeding faith, he saw the finger of the Lord, then...because of his perfect faith he saw the Lord himself. And Jesus Christ said unto him, "And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image."

We must have faith. If we have perfect faith, nothing doubting...there is nothing that will keep us away from our Heavenly Father. Life...is an interesting thing. One day, it will seem like a distant dream...with a million blessings or consequences resting upon the actions made herein. We must have faith, we must be able to see the Lord every day of our lives. Elder Holland's prophetic words have sunk deeply into my heart, and will remain forever...he taught, "We have to move into the realm of the miraculous; we have to live in such a way where we cannot do it alone anymore – where we will resort to the Lord where we will cry, 'Without thy help, I will fall. Help me fly.' Go to the edge where miracles happen. Move into the realm of the miraculous."

Have faith! Have hope! Seek diligently, and be obedient. I know that as we strive to receive revelation from our Heavenly Father, we will receive. We must follow these simple principles so that we can be guided by His hand, slowly back into his presence. This is His Gospel and I am going to do all that I can to serve Him. He is my Lord, my Redeemer, my brother, and my friend...without Him I am absolutely nothing, and without him I would be forced to endure an endless feeling of pain and sorrow. I love my Heavenly Father, and I love Jesus Christ, I will serve them to the end, and it is my prayer that you will to. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.