

## **D&C #11 "The Field Is White Already to Harvest"**

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### **I. Introduction**

As God the Father sought to bless his Spirit children, He devised a plan of salvation whereby each of His children would be given the opportunity for further advancement and progression. In order to accomplish His purpose, it was necessary that His children come to earth. Through the exercise of their free agency, they would be taught the principles of His Gospel, which became known as the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the Savior and Redeemer of the Father's Plan, Jesus volunteered to come to earth, be crucified for the sins of the world, thereby freeing mankind from the grasp of Satan and giving each the opportunity to return back to the presence of the Father. While the gift of resurrection and the freeing of Satan's grasp were given freely, the opportunity to return to live with their Father, was conditional. It involved being taught and accepting the principles of His Gospel. This includes embracing Him as their Savior and Mediator with the Father, repenting from personal sin, being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost to guide and bless their lives. Throughout their lives, they promised to assist in the building of the kingdom of God on earth and sharing the gospel with others.

Shortly after the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, Samuel Smith, a brother to Joseph, was desirous of sharing the Book of Mormon with others.

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"In April 1830, Samuel Smith began traveling to neighboring towns in New York to preach the gospel and introduce people to the Book of Mormon. He had little success, though he did sell a copy of the book to a man named Phinehas Young. In June 1830, Samuel was set apart by the Prophet Joseph to take a missionary journey to the east. He walked 25 miles the first day and stopped at many houses, but the people treated him unkindly and would not listen. The next day he left a copy of the Book of Mormon with John P. Greene, a Methodist minister. John Greene's wife, Rhoda, was Phinehas Young's sister.

"Facing rejection from almost everyone he contacted, Samuel felt that his mission had not been very successful. However, the books he left with Phinehas Young and John P. Greene led to their conversion and the conversion of many others. For example, Phinehas Young and Rhoda Greene had a brother named Brigham, who was converted and later became the second President of the Church. Brigham Young's friend Heber C. Kimball also joined the Church. He later served in the First Presidency. Both Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball were instrumental in the conversion of thousands in the United States and England." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 58).

When Samuel returned home from his initial experience of sharing the gospel, he was discouraged. Like those who would later follow his example, he also learned not all who are extended the invitation to hear the message of the gospel, are interested. Whether the individual receives or rejects the invitation to hear the gospel is their choice. It does not, however, diminish the responsibility each member has been given by the Lord to extend the opportunity. Some will receive the message immediately. For others, it will take longer. Some may be called upon to plant the seed that others will be called to harvest. It is important to remember that both individuals will be blessed by the Lord for their efforts. Samuel did not know the result of his labors, but it did not stop him from serving other missions.

Susan Easton Black states,

"He [Samuel] served his most challenging mission with Orson Hyde (see D&C 75:13). This eastern states mission lasted eleven months and included meetings and baptisms from Ohio to Maine. 'This was one of the most arduous and toilsome missions ever performed in the Church,' Orson wrote. 'To travel two thousand miles on foot,...often sleeping in school houses after preaching--in barns, in sheds, by the way side...was something of a task.' (*Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997, 295).

There is no question that missionary work then, and now, is difficult. Facing rejection, absence from home, dealing with a variety of companions, learning languages, lessons, adjusting to new experiences, are just a few of the challenges the missionary of today faces. The blessings that come along with the strength and maturity to the missionary, more than compensates for the challenges and adjustments required. It is a great blessing or an answer to prayer when the door opens, and the individual says, "Come in." As you share the message of Jesus Christ and the restoration, the person feels the spirit of the message and at the conclusion of the meeting says, "Yes, I would like you to come back." Words are not adequate to express the thrill that comes as the individual accepts the message of truth. The challenges and adversity you were experiencing begin to dwindle in significance, in comparison to the joy you now feel as a servant of the Lord.

## **II. Serve Him With All Your Heart, Might, Mind, and Strength**

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teachers' manual states,

"In February 1829, Joseph Smith's parents came to visit Joseph and Emma [who were then living] in Harmony, Pennsylvania. During this time, the Prophet inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in D&C 4 for his father, Joseph Smith Sr.

"In addition to this revelation for his father, the Prophet received revelations for many others who asked him to inquire of the Lord and learn of His will for them. Some of these revelations are recorded in D&C 11; 12; 14; 15, and 16. Although these revelations were given for individuals, the principles pertain to all who serve in the Lord's kingdom." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel*

*Doctrine Teacher's manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 59).

Doctrine and Covenants 4:1-2 [Joseph Smith, Sr.]

**1 Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men.**

**2 Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading of Section 4 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to his father, Joseph Smith Sr., at Harmony, Pennsylvania, February 1829." (Heading: Section 4. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 7).

The "marvelous work [that] is about to come forth" (D&C 4:1), refers to the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth which is approximately seven months in the future. While Joseph Smith, Sr. had chosen not to affiliate with any church, he had allowed his wife and children to be members if that was their desire. His wife, Lucy, and three of the Smith children [Hyrum, Samuel, and Sophronia] had joined the Presbyterian faith. (see PGP, Joseph Smith-History 1:7). Father Smith had supported the reading of the Family Bible which is where Joseph Smith first received his introduction to the scriptures. It was Joseph's father who had told him to obey the request of the Angel Moroni, when Joseph told him regarding his visit. (see *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith By His Mother*. Edited by Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996, [Sixth Printing, 1998], 108-109).

\*What does the Lord require of those who serve in His kingdom?

\*What does it mean to serve with all our heart, might, mind, and strength?

This suggests that we give our total dedication to the Lord's service, regardless of our calling.

\*Why is it important that we devote our whole souls to the

Lord's service?

Building the kingdom of God on the earth is the most important work we can accomplish during our journey upon the earth. We have been given the privilege and honor to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth. As members we enjoy great blessings in our lives. One way of expressing our gratitude for the blessings we have been given is to help this great work go forward so that others may enjoy the same blessings we have received.

\*Why are we sometimes less than fully committed to the Lord's service?

As we strive to raise a family and provide for their needs, the demands upon our time is great. Balancing the needs of our family and our desire to serve in the Church, can be a difficult challenge. At times, we face hard choices. As we seek the Lord's guidance and strength, it is amazing how much easier the choice becomes.

\*How can we improve our commitment to serve the Lord with full devotion?

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"When we put God first, all other things will fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands of our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities." ("The Great Commandment: To Love God," in *Ensign*, May 1988, 4).

Once Joseph Smith, Sr. embraced the gospel, following the restoration of the Church upon the earth, he was a stalwart member.

E. Cecil McGavin states,

"Joseph Smith, Sr., was filled with the testimony of the truth, and was always anxious to share it with others. He was almost sixty when he made the tedious journey...to carry the gospel to his father and mother, his sisters and brothers. Soon after his return [home,] he was imprisoned for a small debt of fourteen dollars, rather than deny the divinity of the Book of Mormon and be forgiven the debt! He was cast into a cell with a condemned murderer and left for

four days without food. Later he was transferred to the prison workyard where he preached the gospel and converted two persons whom he later baptized. He was in prison a full month before his family was able to obtain his release!" (*The Family of Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963, 68; see also Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958, 172-73, 179-186).

\*How can we show the same commitment to sharing the gospel that Joseph Smith Sr. showed?

When our love of the Lord is manifest in our daily actions, we will have a sincere desire for others to have the same joy and happiness we have.

### **III. Prepare to Serve the Lord**

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"Throughout the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord counsels us in how to prepare ourselves to serve Him...this preparation should be a continual effort throughout our lives." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 60).

We continue to turn our attention to the Doctrine and Covenants as we seek direction as to how the Lord would have us prepare ourselves.

Doctrine and Covenants 4:3 [Joseph Smith, Sr.]

**3 Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work;**

Doctrine and Covenants 11:8 [Hyrum Smith]

**8 Verily, verily, I say unto you, even as you desire of me so it shall be done unto you; and, if you desire, you shall be the means of doing much good in this generation.**

\*Why is desire an important attribute in serving the Lord?

\*How can we increase our desire to serve Him?

Section 4 was given to Joseph Smith, Sr. while Section 11 was given to his son, Hyrum. Note the importance of desire as the initial step in our preparation to serve the Lord. We "gottawanta" if we are going to be of service. We may not have much to offer, but if we are willing to serve, the Lord can make up for our limitations. He will not, however, force anyone to serve Him. We have to choose to do so.

Doctrine and Covenants 4:5-6 [Joseph Smith, Sr.]

**5 And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.  
6 Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence.**

Doctrine and Covenants 12:8 [Joseph Knight Sr.]

**8 And no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 12 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Joseph Knight Sr., at Harmony, Pennsylvania, May 1829. Joseph Knight believed the declarations of Joseph Smith concerning his possession of the Book of Mormon plates and the work of translation then in progress and several times had given material assistance to Joseph Smith and his scribe, which enabled them to continue translating. At Joseph Knight's request, the Prophet inquired of the Lord and received this revelation." (Heading: Section 12. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 23).

Doctrine and Covenants 18:19 [Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer]

**19 And if you have not faith, hope, and charity, you can do nothing.**

\*Which attributes are repeated most frequently in these verses?

As we compare these last three verses, we note the commonality of the qualities of "faith, hope, and charity." These three qualities are essential for we are told without them, we "can do nothing" (D&C 18:19). The qualities, of "love" are found in D&C 4:5 and D&C 12:8. Faith is listed twice in D&C 4:5-6 and temperance and being temperate are both found in D&C 4 and D&C 12.

From these three verses, we learn that faith, hope, and charity are essential qualities for without them we can do nothing. Next is love and then temperance.

Webster's New World Dictionary states,

"Temperance. the state or quality of being temperate; self-restraint in conduct, expression, indulgence of the appetites, etc; moderation." (*Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1988, [1994], 1377).

Service in the Lord's kingdom requires our being temperate or in full control of our appetites and in the expression of our emotions. One of Satan's tools to bring about the loss of the Spirit is contention. The servant of the Lord must be able to exercise self-restraint in their conduct and in their words. It would appear that this is one reason why temperance is one of the most important qualities for a servant of the Lord to develop.

Doctrine and Covenants 11:6, 20 [Hyrum Smith]

**6 Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.**

**20 Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind and strength.**

\*Why is obedience important in serving the Lord?

There are two major reasons for our keeping the commandments if we are to be numbered among his servants. The first is that if we are disobedient to the commandments, we will not be able to have the Spirit of the Holy Ghost be with us. In the work of the Lord, without the Spirit, there is little that we would be able to accomplish. Another reason for our obedience, is that this

is the Lord's work. In order for His work to progress, it is essential that He have servants who are obedient to His direction. Rebellious, disobedient servants would be a great hindrance to the work of the Lord for the qualities they manifest would not further the work, but instead prevent it from going forth. The Lord needs servants who are obedient to His will.

Doctrine and Covenants 4:7 [Joseph Smith, Sr.]

**7 Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Amen.**

Doctrine and Covenants 31:12 [Thomas B. Marsh]

**12 Pray always, lest you enter into temptation and lose your reward.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 31 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Thomas B. Marsh, September 1830. The occasion was immediately following a conference of the Church (see the heading to section 30). Thomas B. Marsh had been baptized earlier in the month and had been ordained an elder in the Church before this revelation was given." (Heading: Section 31. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 55).

\*How has prayer helped you in serving the Lord?

Susan Easton Black states,

"After leaving the Methodist Church, Thomas felt led by the Spirit to journey to western New York. There he heard rumors of a 'golden book,' that had been found by a youth named Joseph Smith. [He was led] to E.B. Grandin's print office in Palmyra...Thomas took sixteen pages of the text and returned to Boston. Within the year he had moved his family to Palmyra. Thomas was baptized on 3 September 1830 in Cayuga Lake by David Whitmer. A few days later he was ordained an elder and called by revelation to preach the gospel. [see Section 31.]" (*Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997, 186).

The Lord's instruction to Thomas B. Marsh, to "pray always, lest you enter into temptation and lose your reward" (D&C

31:12), proved prophetic. Despite his initial faithfulness, his pride overcame him and he lost his reward. His experience is a lesson for each of us that regardless of our service and obedience, we must continue to be prayerful and endure in faithfulness.

Doctrine and Covenants 11:21 [Hyrum Smith]

**21 Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 11 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to his brother Hyrum Smith, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, May 1829. This revelation was received through the Urim and Thummim in answer to Joseph's supplication and inquiry. Joseph Smith's history suggests that this revelation was received after the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood." (Heading: Section 11. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 21).

\*What can we learn from this verse about preparing to serve the Lord?

\*How has your experience shown the wisdom of this counsel?

These words were spoken to Hyrum Smith by revelation as he asked his brother, Joseph, to inquire of the Lord as to what the Lord would have him do to help the work go forward. These words are likewise applicable to us. Some times in our eagerness to serve, we fail to realize that we must be prepared, spiritually and intellectually. While the Lord can work miracles, it is important that we read the scriptures daily so that we might increase our understanding of the word of the Lord. It is also important that we understand that all callings in the Church are important in helping the work move forward. These callings may include cleaning the church building, folding the Sunday programs, or setting up chairs, but nevertheless each is significant. While they are less visible acts of service and often go unnoticed, except by the Lord. When we are willing to do anything we are asked by the Lord's

servants, we are beginning to catch the vision of what it really means to serve in the Lord's Church.

#### **IV. "The Field is White"**

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"Throughout the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord communicates a sense of urgency about spreading the gospel. This is because the purpose of missionary work is 'the salvation of souls' (D&C 100:4)." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 60).

Doctrine and Covenants 4:4 [Joseph Smith, Sr.]

**4 For behold the field is white already to harvest;  
and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his  
might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth  
not, but bringeth salvation to his soul;**

Doctrine and Covenants 11:3 [Hyrum Smith]

**3 Behold, the field is white already to harvest;  
therefore, whoso desireth to reap let him thrust in  
his sickle with his might, and reap while the day  
lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul  
everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God.**

Doctrine and Covenants 33:3 [Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet]

**3 For behold, the field is white already to harvest;  
and it is the eleventh hour, and the last time that I  
shall call laborers into my vineyard.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 33 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet, at Fayette, New York, October 1830. In introducing this revelation, Joseph Smith's history affirms that 'the Lord...is ever ready to instruct such as diligently seek in faith.'" (Heading: Section 33. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 56).

\*What did the Lord mean by comparing missionary work to a field that is ready to be harvested?

In Section 33, Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet, had been called to serve as missionaries. In these three verses from the Doctrine and Covenants, the theme is repeated, "the field is white already to harvest." The inference is there were many whom the Lord has prepared to receive His gospel. In the first two scriptures, D&C 4:4 and D&C 11:3, we learn that those who serve will be blessed for their efforts. This is confirmed in Section 15.

Doctrine and Covenants 15:6 [John Whitmer] [Underline added]

**6 And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father. Amen.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 15 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to John Whitmer, at Fayette, New York, June 1829 (see the heading to section 14). [Section 14-David Whitmer; Section 15-John Whitmer; and, Section 16-Peter Whitmer Each had sought of Joseph to know their individual duty.] The message is intimately and impressively personal in that the Lord tells of what was known only to John Whitmer and Himself. John Whitmer later became one of the Eight Witnesses to the Book of Mormon." (Heading: Section 15. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 26).

It is apparent that the work which will be of "most worth" to members of the Church is to "bring souls unto Christ."

In D&C 33:3 we learn that the time is short and the end draws nigh. This was further confirmed by Joseph Smith in his concluding appearance to Wilford Woodruff.

Wilford Woodruff states,

"Joseph Smith continued visiting myself and others up to a certain time, and then it stopped. The last time I saw him

was in heaven. In the night vision I saw him at the door of the temple in heaven. He came and spoke to me. He said he could not stop to talk with me because he was in a hurry. The next man I met was Father Smith; he could not talk to me because he was in a hurry. I met half a dozen brethren who had held high positions on earth, and none of them could stop to talk with me because they were in a hurry. I was much astonished. By and by I saw the Prophet again, and I got the privilege to ask him a question. 'Now,' said I, 'I want to know why you are in a hurry. I have been in a hurry all through my life; but I expected my hurry would be over when I got into the kingdom of heaven, if I ever did.' Joseph said: 'I will tell you, Brother Woodruff. Every dispensation that has had the Priesthood on the earth and has gone into the celestial kingdom, has had a certain amount of work to do to prepare to go to the earth with the Savior when He goes to reign on the earth. Each dispensation has had ample time to do this work. We have not. We are the last dispensation, and so much work has to be done, and we need to be in a hurry in order to accomplish it.' Of course, that was satisfactory to me, but it was new doctrine to me." (*Deseret Weekly*, 7 November, 1896, 642-43; also in "Joseph Smith Visited Me After His Death," by Wilford Woodruff in *Best Loved Stories of the LDS People*, Vol. 2. Edited by Jay A. Parry, Jack M. Lyon, and Linda Ririe Gundy. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1999, 354-355).

Doctrine and Covenants 60:13 [Elders returning to Ohio]

**13 Behold they have been sent to preach my gospel among the congregations of the wicked; wherefore, I given unto them a commandment, thus: Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talents that it may not be known.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 60 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Independence, Jackson Country, Missouri, August 8, 1831. On this occasion the elders who had traveled to Jackson County and participated in the dedication of the land and the temple site desired to know what they were to do." (Heading: Section 60. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 110).

In this revelation, those who had come to Jackson Country, were to return to Kirtland, Ohio. As they travelled they were to preach the gospel along the way, rather than to return speedily to their homes. As holders of the Melchizedek priesthood, they had been given the responsibility to share the principles of the gospel with others.

Doctrine and Covenants 75:3-5 [Elders of Church]

**3 Behold, I say unto you that it is my will that you should go forth and not tarry, neither be idle but labor with your might—**

**4 Lifting up your voices as with the sound of a trump, proclaiming the truth according to the revelations and commandments which I have given you.**

**5 And thus, if ye are faithful, ye shall be laden with many sheaves, and crowned with honor and glory, and immortality, and eternal life.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 75 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Amherst, Ohio, January 25, 1832. This section comprises two separate revelations (the first in verses 1 through 22 and the second in verses 23 through 36) given on the same day. The occasion was a conference at which Joseph Smith was sustained and ordained President of the High Priesthood. Certain elders desired to learn more about their immediate duties. These revelations followed." (Heading: Section 75. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 134).

\*How might this warning apply to us?

\*Why do some of us delay sharing the gospel?

Although the time period between Section 60 and Section 75 is approximately six months, each were given as individuals sought to know about their duties as members of the Church. They serve to underline the fact that as members of the Church we do not idle away our time, but instead be anxiously engaged in sharing the gospel. When we give our time and talents to missionary work, we will receive greater blessings from the Lord including, "honor, and glory, and immortality, and eternal life" (D&C 75:5).

Henry B. Eyring states,

"It's easy to say, 'The time isn't right.' But there is danger in procrastination. Years ago I worked for a man in California. He hired me; he was kind to me; he seemed to regard me highly. I may have been the only Latter-day Saint he ever knew well. I don't know all the reasons I found to wait for a better moment to talk with him about the gospel. I just remember my feeling of sorrow when I learned that after he had retired and I lived far away, he and his wife had been killed in a late-night drive to their home in Carmel, California. He loved his wife. He loved his children. He had loved his parents. He loved his grandchildren, and he will love their children and will want to be with them forever.

"Now, I don't know how the crowds will be handled in the world to come. But I suppose that I will meet him, that he will look into my eyes, and that I will see in them the question, 'Hal, you knew. Why didn't you tell me?'

"When I think of him, and when I think of that widow I baptized and her family who are now to be sealed to her and to each other, I want to do better. I want to increase my power to invite people to be taught. With that desire and with faith that God will help us, we will do better. It isn't hard to see how." ("A Voice of Warning," in *Ensign*, November 1998, 33).

#### **V. "Open Your Mouths and They Shall Be Filled"**

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord gives direction about *what* we should teach and *how* we should teach as we share the gospel. [The Lord] also encourages us to share the gospel without fear, promising to help when we feel inadequate." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 61).

Doctrine and Covenants 11:9 [Hyrum Smith]

**9 Say nothing but repentance unto this generation. Keep my commandments, and assist to bring forth my work, according to my commandments, and you shall be blessed.**

Doctrine and Covenants 15:6 [John Whitmer]

**6 And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father. Amen**

That which is of most worth to us is to share the message of the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:6 [Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer]

**6 Behold, the world is ripening in iniquity; and it must needs be that the children of men are stirred up unto repentance, both the Gentiles and also the house of Israel.**

As the iniquity of the world increases, it is especially important that they now be taught the gospel so they can repent.

Doctrine and Covenants 31:3-4 [Thomas B. Marsh]

**3 Lift up your heart and rejoice, for the hour of your mission is come; and your tongue shall be loosed, and you shall declare glad tidings of great joy unto this generation.**

The call is given to Thomas B. Marsh to preach the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 33:10-11 [Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet]

**10 Yea, open your mouths and they shall be filled, saying: Repent, repent, and prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;**

**11 Yea, repent and be baptized, every one of you, for a remission of your sins; yea, be baptized even by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost.**

All we need to do is be willing and the Lord will fill our mouths with the words of the restoration, including the first principles of the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:12 [Twelve elders]

**12 And again, the elders, priests, and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in which is the fulness of the gospel.**

The elders of the Church who are called to preach the gospel, are to specifically teach the principle of the gospel as found in the Bible and Book of Mormon. The Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price were not yet bound, or they would have been instructed to teach from all the standard works.

Doctrine and Covenants 52:8-9 ["Elders of Church"]

**8 And also my servant John Murdock, and my servant Hyrum Smith, take their journey unto the same place [vs.3 land of Missouri], by the way of Detroit.  
9 And let them journey from thence preaching the word by the way, saying none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written [Standard works] and that which is taught them by the Comforter through the prayer of faith.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 52 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the elders of the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, June 6, 1831. A conference had been held at Kirtland, beginning on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and closing on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June. At this conference the first distinctive ordinations to the office of high priest were made, and certain manifestations of false and deceiving spirits were discerned and rebuked." (Heading: Section 52. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 95).

In these specific verses, John Murdock and Hyrum Smith are assigned as missionary companions and they are to go "to the land of Missouri" (D&C 52:3), by way of Detroit. In February 9, 1831, they had been instructed to preach "my gospel two by two" (D&C 42:6). This instruction is reiterated in D&C 52:10.

Elders Murdock and Hyrum Smith, like those who had proceeded them are to teach the words of the "prophets and apostles [as found in the standard works] and the words of the Comforter [Holy Ghost] as they are inspired.

\*What do these verses reveal about *what* the Lord's servants should teach?

\*Why is the message of repentance so important?

Doctrine and Covenants 18:11 states, "For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pains of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him."

Doctrine and Covenants 18:20-21 [Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer]

**20 Content against no church, save it be the church of the devil.**

**21 Take upon you the name of Christ, and speak the truth in soberness [not lightminded; sincere].**

Contention is of the devil [B/M, 3 Nephi 11:29], and its presence results in the removal of the spirit. The gospel is to be presented without contention, but with sincerity and humility.

Doctrine and Covenants 38:41 [Conference of Church]

**41 And let your preaching be the warning voice, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and in meekness [humble].**

Missionaries are representatives of Jesus Christ and, therefore, should present the truths of the gospel with sincere concern for the welfare of the individual, and accordingly, let the individual choose to accept or reject the message.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:6 [Twelve elders]

**6 And ye shall go forth in the power of my Spirit, preaching my gospel, two by two, in my name, lifting up your voices as with the sound of a trump, declaring my word like unto angels of God.**

The direction to go "two by two" is so that a second witness may be given to the truth of the message of the restoration. The sound of a trump refers to the clarity of the message, not the volume, as the message is presented to the sincere seeker of truth.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:14 [Twelve elders]

**14 And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Crag J. Ostler state,

"It is the Spirit that carries the message of the gospel teacher to the hearts of the listener...It naturally follows that teachers must live the gospel, or they cannot enjoy the companionship of the Spirit.

Brigham Young said: 'When a man rises up to speak in the name of the Lord, and is filled with the light, and the intelligence and power which cometh from God, his countenance alone will convey more, to those who are inspired by the same spirit, than can possibly be conveyed, by the words of any language now used by mankind.'" (*Journal of Discourse*, 10:353)." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 303-304).

Doctrine and Covenants 75:4 [Joseph sustained Pres. High Priesthood; number called to serve missions]

**4 Lifting up your voices as with the sound of a trump [clarity], proclaiming the truth according to the revelations and commandments which I have given you.**

The elders are to teach the principles of the gospel with clarity according to the standard works of church.

Doctrine and Covenants 100:7-8 [Word of Lord to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon]

**7 But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things.**

**8 And I given unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 100 states, "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at Perrysbury, New York, October 12, 1833. The two brethren, having been absent from their family for several days, felt some concern about them." (Heading: Section 100. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 193).

Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"*Solemnity of heart*. This is a beautiful adornment of one who speaks in the name of the Lord. Trivial comparisons, laughable stories, ridiculous gesture and attitudes are contrary to the dignity and calling of a servant of the Lord. Humorous anecdotes or personal adventures, may be introduced by a missionary as illustrations of a principle, or doctrine, but if they are told to excite merriment, or to magnify the speaker, they must be condemned. They should be left for the minstrel show, or the music hall." (*The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Revised Edition, 1962], 632).

When we declare without pretense, the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ in sincerity of purpose and testimony, the Spirit will then bear witness to the heart of the individual the truthfulness of the message.

\*What do these verses reveal about *how* the Lord's servants should teach?

\*Why is it important to avoid contention in teaching the gospel?

\*What does it mean to "[lift] up your voices as with the sound of a trump? (D&C 42:6; 75:4).

\*How can we be both bold and meek as we teach the gospel?

B/M, Alma 38:10-12

10 And now as you have begun to teach the word even so I would that ye should continue to teach; and I would that ye would be diligent and temperate in all things.

11 See that ye are not lifted up unto pride; yea, see that ye do not boast in your own wisdom, nor of your much strength.

12 Use boldness, but never overbearance; and also see that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love; see that ye refrain from idleness.

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"The Lord repeatedly exhorted the elders to open their mouths to declare His gospel." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 61).

Doctrine and Covenants 30:11 [John Whitmer]

11 And your whole labor shall be in Zion, with all your soul, from henceforth; yea, you shall ever open your mouth in my cause, not fearing what man can do, for I am with you. Amen.

Doctrine 30:5 [Peter Whitmer, Jr.]

5 Behold, I say unto you, Peter [Whitmer, Jr.], that you shall take your journey with your brother Oliver [Cowdery]; for the time has come that it is expedient in me that you shall open your mouth to declare my gospel; therefore, fear not, but give heed unto the words and advice of your brother, which he shall give you.

The Lord directs his missionaries not to be reticent in sharing their testimony of the gospel fearing the response of others. The Lord promises if we will speak up, He will bless us. Verses 11 and 5 were given to John and Peter Whitmer, Jr., respectfully.

Doctrine and Covenants 33:8-11 [Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet]

**8 Open your mouths and they shall be filled, and you shall become even as Nephi of old, who journeyed from Jerusalem in the wilderness.**

**9 Yea, open your mouths and spare not, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your backs, for lo, I am with you.**

**10 Yea, open your mouths and they shall be filled, saying: Repent, repent, and prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;**

**11 Yea, repent and be baptized, every one of you, for a remission of your sins; yea, be baptized even by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost.**

In each of these verses, these five individuals, and all of us, are admonished to open our mouths and share the truth of the principles of the gospel. As they, and we, do so, the Lord will bless us and give us the direction and principles we are to teach. He will not abandon us.

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"The Lord...said that He is not pleased with [some individuals]." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 61).

The following verses from the Doctrine and Covenants offer us some understanding as why the Lord is displeased.

Doctrine and Covenants 60:2 [Elders travelled to Missouri]

**2 But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Wo unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them.**

There are those within this group of elders, and us, who have the ability to speak, but they/we do not share the message of the gospel out of personal fear of ridicule and

rejection of others. If they/we do not repent, the Lord will unleash His anger toward them, and like the individual, in the parable of the talents, will lose the blessings he might have otherwise received (Matthew 25:28-29).

\*How might this counsel also apply to us?

\*How can we overcome fear in sharing the gospel?

Doctrine and Covenants 19:38 [Martin Harris]

38 Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing--yea, even more than if you should obtain treasures of earth and corruptibleness to the extent thereof.

Doctrine and Covenants 33:12-14 [Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet]

12 Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and remember that they shall have faith in me or they can in nowise be saved;

13 And upon this rock I will build my church; yea, upon this rock ye are built, and if ye continue, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

14 And ye shall remember the church articles and covenants to keep them.

Doctrine and Covenants 75:9-13 [Certain Elders taught duties]

9 And let my servant Luke Johnson go with him [William E. McLellin], and proclaim the things which I have commanded them--

10 Calling on the name of the Lord for the Comforter, which shall teach them all things that are expedient for them--

11 Praying always that they faint not; and inasmuch as they do this, I will be with them even unto the end.

12 Behold, this is the will of the Lord your God concerning you. Even so. Amen.

13 And again, verily thus saith the Lord, let my servant Orson Hyde and my servant Samuel H. Smith take their journey into the eastern countries, and proclaim the things which I have commanded them; and inasmuch

**as they are faithful, lo, I will be with them even unto the end.**

In these three sections [19; 33; 75], we learn the antidote to fear is: (1) Sincere prayer for help and guidance; (2) To exercise faith and trust in the Lord; (3) Be obedient to the commandments; and, (4) Follow the promptings of the Comforter or Holy Ghost. As we exercise our faith in the Lord, He will be with us.

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"[Another reason why] some of us hesitate to share the gospel [may be] because we lack confidence in our speaking or teaching abilities." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 61).

Doctrine and Covenants 11:21 [Hyrum Smith]

**21 Seek not declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men.**

Doctrine and Covenants 14:8 [David Whitmer]

**8 And it shall come to pass, that if you shall ask the Father in my name, in faith believing, you shall receive the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance, that you may stand as a witness of the things of which you shall both hear and see, and also that you may declare repentance unto this generation.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 14 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to David Whitmer, at Fayette, New York, June 1829. The Whitmer family had become greatly interested in the translating of the Book of Mormon. The Prophet established his residence at the home of Peter Whiter Sr., where he dwelt until the work of the translation was carried to completion and the copyright on the forthcoming book was secured. Three of the Whitmer sons, each having received a testimony as to the genuineness of the work, became deeply concerned over the matter of their individual duty. This revelation and the

two following (sections 15 and 16) were given in answer to an inquiry through the Urim and Thummim. David Whitmer later became one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon." (Heading: Section 14. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 25).

Doctrine and Covenants 31:3 [Thomas B. Marsh]

**3 Lift up your heart and rejoice, for the hour of your mission is come; and your tongue shall be loosed, and you shall declare glad tidings of great joy unto this generation.**

\*How can we overcome our lack of confidence?

Here are three suggestions: (1) Ask the Lord for guidance and strength so that your confidence may increase; (2) Strengthen your knowledge and understanding of the scriptures by committing yourself to a daily scripture study program; and, (3) Trust the Lord will bless you as you open your mouth. Now, open your mouth.

\*Ask your friends to share a time when the Spirit prompted them to share the gospel?

Read again the experience Samuel H. Smith had on his first mission as recorded in the Introduction, before you respond to these questions.

\*Why might Samuel Smith have felt like a failure after his first mission?

\*In what ways was he successful?

\*What can we learn from his experience to help us in our own missionary efforts?

## **VI. Lord Promises Great Blessings To Those Who Labor in His Service**

\*What does the Lord promise to those who labor diligently in His service?

\*What do these scriptures teach us?

Doctrine and Covenants 4:4 [Joseph Smith, Sr.]

**4 For behold the field is white already to harvest;  
and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his  
might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth  
not, but bringeth salvation to his soul;**

He that is taught and he that teaches are both blessed.

Doctrine and Covenants 11:3

**3 Behold, the field is white already to harvest;  
therefore, whoso desireth to reap let him thrust in  
his sickle with his might, and reap while the day  
lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul  
everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God.**

The only qualification you need is to have a sincere desire to serve the Lord, and He will bless you as you "thrust in...[your]sickle" or open your mouth.

Doctrine and Covenants 75:5 [Joseph Smith sustained as President of High Priesthood; certain elders]

**5 And thus, if ye are faithful ye shall be laden with  
many sheaves, and crowned with honor, and glory, and  
immortality, and eternal life.**

If we persist and do not quit when we become discouraged, suffer ridicule or rejection, we will be rewarded for our efforts. The Lord will bless us with his choicest blessings, including eternal life.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:15-16 [Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer]

**15 And it if so be that you should labor all your days  
in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save  
it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy  
with him in the kingdom of my Father!**

**16 And now, if your joy will be great with one soul  
that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my  
Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring  
many souls unto me!**

Dieter F. Uchtdorf shared the following regarding the effort expended by two missionaries as they knocked on

every door of a four story apartment building in Germany. No one listened to their message, but they continued until finally they "knocked on the last door of the fourth floor."

Dieter F. Uchtdorf states,

"When that door opened, a young girl smiled at them and asked them to wait while she spoke with her mother.

"Her mother was only 36 years old, had recently lost her husband, and was in no mood to talk with Mormon missionaries. So she told her daughter to send them away.

"But the daughter pleaded with her. These young men were so nice, she said. And it would only take a few minutes.

"So, reluctantly, the mother agreed. The missionaries delivered their message and handed a book to the mother to read--The Book of Mormon.

"After they left, the mother decided to read at least a few pages.

"She finished the entire book with a few days.

"No long after, this wonderful single-parent family entered the waters of baptism.

[The young family attended the same Church that Dieter F. Uchtdorf attended. He was only twelve at the time but he was taken by the charming young woman--the one who had pleaded with her mother to listen to the missionaries. Later they were married].

He continues, "She is loved by all who meet her...She has blessed the lives of many people through her love for the gospel and her sparkling personality. She truly is the sunshine of my life.

"How often have I lifted my heart in gratitude for the two missionaries who did not stop at the first floor! How often my heart reaches out in appreciation for their *faith* and *work*. How often have I given thanks that they kept going--even to the fourth floor, last door." ("Fourth Floor, Last Door," in *Ensign*, November 2016, 17-18).

\*Are there any who would like to express their feelings for

Church members who shared the gospel with them or their feelings as they have shared the gospel with others?

Doctrine and Covenants 31:5 [Thomas B. Marsh]

**5 Therefore, thrust in your sickle with all your soul, and your sins are forgiven you, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your back, for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Wherefore, your family shall live.**

Upon first reading, it would appear that one of the blessings being actively engaged in missionary work can bring is forgiveness of personal sin. Forgiveness of sin, we have been taught, can only occur through the process of repentance. It includes the steps of recognition of sin; remorse of sin; report sin to authority; restore to offended, and resolve not to repeat. The sins that are forgiven by our willingness to share the gospel with others are obtained because we opened our mouths. By taking this action, we will not be numbered with those who will be held responsible for those who would have received the message of the gospel had they fulfilled their responsibility.

Ezekiel 3:18

**18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.**

John Taylor states,

"[He emphasized to the elders that they must serve with all their heart, might, mind, and strength or] God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty... He has called upon us to enlighten them, and to spread forth the truth, and send forth the principles of the Gospel, and point out the way of life. And it is for us to attend to these things, that we may secure the smiles and approbation of God." (*Journal of Discourse*, Vol. 20. London, England: Latter-Day Saints' Book Depot, 20, 1880, [Eighth Reprint, 1974], 23).

Doctrine and Covenants 84:60-61 [Elders who returned from missions]

**60 Verily, verily, I say unto you who now hear my words, which are my voice, blessed are ye inasmuch as you receive these things;**

**61 For I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment—that you remain steadfast in your minds in solemnity and the spirit of prayer, in bearing testimony to all the world of those things which are communicated unto you.**

The message of the Lord to all who served honorable missions is that as they continue to be faithful to the covenants they have made and to the witness they have given, and they will be protected from sin and temptations by the destroyer. While they have been released from full-time missionary service, each continue to have the responsibility and blessing of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout their lives.

Doctrine and Covenants 31:7 [Thomas B. Marsh]

**7 Yea, I will open the hearts of the people, and they will receive you. And I will establish a church by your hand.**

The Lord had prepared individuals to receive the truths of the gospel. He needs, however, each of us to be willing to be His servants and share His message. As we do so, many will come to know the truths of the restoration.

Doctrine and Covenants 109:55-57 [Dedicatory Prayer: Kirtland Temple]

**55 Remember the kings, the princes, the nobles, and the great ones of the earth, and all people, and the churches, all the poor, the needy, and afflicted ones of the earth.**

**56 That their hearts may be softened when thy servants shall go out from thy house, O Jehovah, to bear testimony of thy name; that their prejudices may give way before the truth, and thy people may obtain favor in the sight of all;**

**57 That all the ends of the earth may know that we, thy servants, have heard thy voice, and that thou hast sent us.**

In these verses of the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, revealed to Joseph Smith, the petition is made regarding the receptivity of all the people on the earth, including the rulers and leaders as well as the poor and the needy, to the saving truths of the restoration. Those who hear the message of the restoration and respond favorably to the words of His servants, will receive the blessings of the Lord.

\*Invite others to share experiences they have had when the Lord opened their hearts or the hearts of others to the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 31:11 [Thomas B. Marsh]

**11 Go your way whithersoever I will, and it shall be given you by the Comforter what you shall do and whither you shall go.**

As we heed the promptings of the Spirit, we will be guided to those who have been prepared to receive the message of the restoration. While not all will embrace its teachings, all need to be given the opportunity to hear the message of the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:85 [Elders returning]

**85 Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man.**

Missionary work is the work of the Lord. We prepare ourselves to be His worthy servants as we study the truths of His gospel. When the opportunity presents itself, the Lord can enhance our preparation. The message of the Lord, given through us, will serve to touch the heart of the honest seeker of truth. We are His instruments to share His truths. We are more useable when we are prepared intellectually, as well as spiritually.

Doctrine and Covenants 100:5-6 [Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon]

**5 Therefore, verily I say unto you lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put**

**into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded  
before men;**

**6 For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in  
the very moment, what ye shall say.**

What a wonderful promise from the Lord that He will give us "in the very moment," what we are to say! If we will do our part, we cannot fail when we are in the Lord's service. He will stand by us and bless us so we are not confounded. We must, however, be conscientious in our efforts to continually prepare ourselves accordingly to do His work.

\*Consider sharing experiences when the Spirit has guided your efforts or inspired you as you have shared the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 31:13 [Thomas A. Marsh]

**13 Be faithful unto the end, and lo, I am with you.  
These words are not of man nor of men, but of me, even  
Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, by the will of the  
Father. Amen.**

The promise, "I am with you," confirms the Lord's commitment that He will sustain and bless us when we are willing to act as His servants and share His gospel with others. We are not alone in our efforts to bring about the salvation of His children.

Doctrine and Covenants 75:9-13 [Certain Elders taught duties]

**9 And let my servant Luke Johnson go with him [William  
E. McLellin], and proclaim the things which I have  
commanded them--**

**10 Calling on the name of the Lord for the Comforter,  
which shall teach them all things that are expedient  
for them--**

**11 Praying always that they faint not; and inasmuch as  
they do this, I will be with them even unto the end.**

**12 Behold, this is the will of the Lord your God  
concerning you. Even so. Amen.**

**13 And again, verily thus saith the Lord, let my  
servant Orson Hyde and my servant Samuel H. Smith take  
their journey into the eastern countries, and proclaim  
the things which I have commanded them; and inasmuch**

**as they are faithful, lo, I will be with them even unto the end.**

The purpose of a missionary conference, then and now, is to address common challenges that are encountered in doing missionary work. The areas often include: Following directions of leaders; Not relying on own abilities; Being humble and calling on the Lord for His direction; Teaching message received; and, Importance of bearing testimony. If we will be faithful to the counsel we have received through the Lord's servants, we cannot fail. We are engaged in the work of the Lord. He will sustain and bless us if we are obedient.

Doctrine and Covenants 84:88 [Elders who had returned from missions]

**88 And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you to bear you up.**

This verse is frequently quoted in reference to the all-encompassing promise of the Lord to sustain, support, and protect those who are in His service.

Thomas S. Monson adds,

"..when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. Remember that whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies." ("Duty Calls," in *Ensign*, May 1996, 44).

We cannot fail when we are actively engaged doing in the Lord's work.

\*Invite class members to share experiences when they have felt the Lord's support them and bear them up as they have shared the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 71:9-10 [Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon]

**9 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you--there is no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper;  
10 And if any man lift his voice against you he shall be confounded in mine own due time.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 71 states, "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at Hiram, Ohio, December 1, 1831. The Prophet had continued to translate the Bible with Sidney Rigdon as his scribe until this revelation was received, at which time it was temporarily laid aside so as to enable them to fulfill the instruction given herein. The brethren were to go forth to preach in order to allay the unfriendly feelings that had developed against the Church as a result of the publication of letters written by Ezra Booth, who had apostatized." (Heading: Section 71. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 130)."

Dan Baker states,

"Ezra Booth, because of his excommunication, was convinced by others to use his influence in spreading falsehoods to stop the growth of the Church. Ezra sent a series of letters to the Ohio Star in Ravenna, Ohio, in hopes of stemming the tide of Church conversions and also to create confusion with Church members, thus causing them to question or leave their newfound religion. To combat this, Joseph and [Sidney] served a mission from December 4, 1831, to approximately January 10, 1832, in the Ravenna and Kirtland area. Others are also called on similar missions." *Little Known Stories about the Doctrine and Covenants*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, Inc., 2012, 148).

In order to address the opposition tide, Ezra Booth, a former member was creating, the Lord called Joseph and Sidney to serve a six week mission. The purpose was to respond to the accusations and confusion that the newspaper articles had created. The Lord confirmed to Joseph and Sidney that opposition to His Church would not succeed, then or now.

\*How can the Lord's promise help us today when opposition occurs against the Church?

Doctrine and Covenants 84:80 [Elders returned]

**80 And any man that shall go and preach this gospel of the kingdom, and fail not to continue faithful in all things, shall not be weary in mind, neither darkened, neither in body, limb, nor joint; and a hair of his**

**head shall not fall to the ground unnoticed. And they shall not go hungry, neither athirst.**

As missionary's labors have expanded to include many parts of the world, the exposure of the missionary to disease and physical harm has dramatically increased from the early days of the Church. This is compounded by the difference in age and maturity among today's missionaries. There are some missionaries, who are worthy, but do not complete their missionary service. This does not alter the promise of the Lord to watch over his servants and to bless them in their desire to serve. Ultimately it may, however, involve a missionary being released from full-time service so that he may then be called to fulfill other missionary labors. In the final analysis, the Lord knows the hearts and desires of both the elders and sisters who serve, and watches over them accordingly.

\*Invite class members to share how the Lord has sustained them mentally, physically, and spiritually as they have preached the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 100:7-8 [Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon]

**7 But a commandment I give unto you that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things.**

**8 And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this, the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say.**

Hoyt W. Brewster states,

"Webster defines solemnity as the quality of character of being solemn, especially being serious, dignified, or awe-inspiring." (Solemnities of Eternity in *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2012, [Revised Edition], 540).

Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett state,

"Joseph and Sidney are commanded to keep in mind the seriousness of their work. Meekness, which is also mentioned here, is the ability to put the will of God

before one's own will... If missionaries in meekness of spirit confine themselves to preaching only what the Lord inspires them to preach rather than what may please their own hearts and minds, then everything they say will be God's own truth, and the Holy Ghost will be able to bear powerful witness that it is so." (*A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 3. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2004, 254).

\*Invite members to share experiences when they have felt the Holy Ghost bear record when they have shared the gospel.

## **VII. Conclusions**

As we share the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are serving as His servants. Without the opportunity of hearing the truths of the Gospel, the wicked would not have the opportunity to repent or the righteous to have His truths to bless their lives.

One of the first to share the message of the restoration of the Church was Samuel H. Smith. Despite his efforts, he was only successful in placing two copies of the Book of Mormon. He felt he had failed as a missionary. History has proved him wrong in his conclusion.

**Serve Him With All Your Heart, Might, Mind, and Strength:** The words given by Joseph Smith to his Father, found in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 4, have greatly impacted many who have served as missionaries.

They serve to remind us that nothing less than our complete dedication is required when we are in the service of the Lord. As we put God first in our lives, we will not only bring great blessings into the lives of others, but our own lives will also be blessed.

**Prepare to Serve the Lord:** It is important that we are prepared to serve. The Lord provides in the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants, the preparation required. It involves desire, faith, hope, charity, love, and temperance. It also requires individual obedience to the commandments and to the promptings of the Lord. Nor can we neglect the importance of scripture study if we would be more profitable servants.

**The Field is White:** The time is urgent as we go forth to serve in these latter days to gather those who are receptive to the message of the gospel, as well as to warn the wicked. Those who are diligent in doing the work of the Lord will receive great blessings as a result of their service to God's children.

**Open Your Mouths And They Shall Be Filled:** The Lord teaches us what we should teach as well as how we are to do His work. We are to warn the wicked so they may repent, and receive the blessings of the Lord. In order to do so, we must open our mouths and share the scriptures as well as the words of the living Prophets and Apostles.

In all our labors we are to avoid contention and deliver our message in sincerity and humility. Seeking the Spirit to abide with us is absolutely necessary in doing the Lord's work. If we do not have the Spirit, we should not teach. (see D&C 42:14.) It is the Spirit which converts the individual; we are only the Lord's messengers.

As we are faithful to our calling, the Lord will be with us, protecting and guiding our efforts. We must not let fear or lack of confidence prevent us from sharing the words of the Lord to His children.

**The Lord Promises Great Blessings To Those Who Labor in His Service:** The field is white, ready for harvest. There are many whom the Lord has prepared to receive His truths. As we serve, we will be instruments in His hands in furthering His work and building His kingdom on earth. If we are faithful, we will be blessed for our efforts. Those who fulfill their duty will find great joy and happiness in this life and in the world to come.

Despite oppositions we may encounter, the work of the Lord will go forth. The forces of evil will be defeated, and Zion will prosper. What a privilege it is to be part of this latter day work.

In our next lesson [D&C#12], we will address the gathering of latter-day Israel. We will review its history, and importance and the part we can play in this process.