

D&C#34 Faith In Every Footstep

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I. Introduction

A. Journey Across Iowa

Church History in the Fulness of Times states,

"When the Saints crossed the Mississippi River into Iowa, they began a new quest for a home where they could build the kingdom of God without oppression. The way to this new refuge was not easy; it exacted toil, sacrifice, and death, and the first leg of the journey--the trek across Iowa territory--proved to be the hardest. The main "Camp of Israel" took 131 days to cover the 300 miles they traveled across Iowa. The Pioneer Company a year later took only 111 days to cover 1,050 miles from Winter Quarters [Nebraska], to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Inadequate preparation, lack of knowledgeable guides, delays, miserable weather, and difficult terrain made the Iowa journey one of the most trying in the Church's history. Nevertheless, these hardy folk knew no such word as failure. The Iowa journey simply hardened their resolve and provided valuable experience for the future.

"After Brigham Young had left Nauvoo and crossed the river to the Iowa side, the mud became so deep his teams had to be yoked double to pull the wagons up the hill to Sugar

Creek camp. A week later the temperature plummeted and the Mississippi froze over hastening the abandonment of Nauvoo by allowing numerous Saints to cross on the ice. Because of the extreme cold, however, many people, including Brigham Young and Willard Richards, fell ill at Sugar Creek...The Saints did not begin to leave the encampment at Sugar Creek until 1 March 1846." (*Church History In The Fulness Of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 309-310).

Church History in the Fulness of Times continues,

"Part of the Saints' delay in leaving resulted from concern for the best route across Iowa.

"Three fundamental problems, however, inhibited the progress of the Saints across Iowa. The first was the lack of adequate food supplies...

"The second problem was the disorganization of the camp, which was spread for miles across eastern Iowa...

"...the final and perhaps most challenging factor of all--wet Spring weather. Sudden melting snow, almost constant rain, swollen creeks, interminable mud, and violent wind retarded progress. Brigham Young's comment late in March, [was] that they had passed through only one mud hole that day 'which was about six miles in length,' illustrates the effects of spring thaws and rains that left the roads and campsites a bog...So many wagons mired in the mud that travel was reduced to less than half a mile per day." (*Church History In The Fulness Of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 311-312).

B. "All Is Well"

Church History in the Fulness of Times states,

"By 15 April the camp found itself on Locust Creek near the present-day Iowa-Missouri state line. William Clayton, frustrated with the slow progress of the camp and the burdens of caring for a large family, gratefully received news that his plural wife, Diantha, left behind for care and safety in Nauvoo, had given birth to a healthy boy. He thereupon composed a new song of praise to the Lord entitled 'All Is Well' (today called "Come, Come, Ye

Saints'), which became an anthem for many Mormon pioneers who subsequently crossed the plains to the Great Basin." (*Church History In The Fulness Of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 313).

This hymn continues as one of the most favorite in the Church. It offers comfort from sorrow and courage to carry forth regardless of challenges or circumstances.

C. Way Stations

Church History in the Fulness of Times states,

"[While] at Locust Creek, the Brethren prayerfully forged a new plan to establish farms or way stations along the route west. By 24 April 24, [1846], the pioneers reached a place they named Garden Grove. It was sixty miles northwest of Locust Creek, about halfway across Iowa. Within three weeks they had broken 715 acres of tough prairie sod, built cabins, and established a small community. A high council was called to regulate both Church and civic affairs, and two hundred people were assigned to improve the first way station.

"[Due to need for timber, scouts found sufficient], twenty-five miles northwest of Garden Grove...a few days later Brigham Young arrived and immediately organized a second way station at Mount Pisgah [Named by Parley P. Pratt in reference to the mountain from which Moses saw the promised land.] Another high council was appointed, and several thousand acres were cooperatively enclosed, planted, and farmed...Soon Mount Pisgah outstripped Garden Grove in size and significance. Both, however, were important pioneer way stations from 1846 to 1852." (*Church History In The Fulness Of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 314).

D. Missouri River

Church History in the Fulness of Times states,

"The final distance from Mount Pisgah to the Missouri River, at Council Bluffs, a distance of 100 miles only took the advanced company fourteen days. Temporary headquarters were established at Mosquito Creek on Pottawattomie Indian

land." (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 313-314).

Andrew Jenson states,

"Sun. 14 [June, 1846].--Pres. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, George Miller, and Parley P. Pratt arrived on the banks of the Missouri river, with their respective companies. Here a ferry boat was built soon afterwards, when some of the Saints commenced to cross the river.

"Tues. 16.--The advanced camps of the exiled Saints moved back to the bluffs across the Mosquito Creek, and encamped near good water, about nine miles from the trading post. There they remained till the ferry boat was built." (*Church Chronology. A Record of Important Events*. Compiled by Andrew Jenson. Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1898, [Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged, 1914], 29-30).

E. Mormon Battalion

Prior to Brigham Young departing from Nauvoo, he had authorized Jesse C. Little to preside over the Saints in the East and to seek help from the nation's government. On May 12 1846, war had been declared by the United States against Mexico. Jesse C. Little was assisted in his contact with President Polk by Thomas L. Kane, son of John Kane, and a prominent federal judge and political associate of President Polk. Initially the Saints were to build a blockhouse and forts along the Oregon Trail, but the war with Mexico provided a better opportunity for the Saints and the government to help each other. Initially the five hundred volunteers were to be recruited *after* the Saints had reached California, but the order was changed as Captain James Allen was dispatched to Mormon encampment in southern Iowa to recruit volunteers to fight the war with Mexico. At this time, California included present California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, western Colorado, and southwestern Wyoming. Captain Allen, who was at Mount Pisgah, initially encountered stiff opposition and skepticism regarding the recruitment. He was, however, treated with civility, but was directed by Wilford Woodruff to go to Council Bluffs and present his case to President Brigham Young. (see *Church History In The Fulness of Times*. [1989], 315).

Captain James Allen went to Council Bluffs and met with Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and Orson Pratt. His presence was viewed by the Mormon leaders as a positive response to the negotiations of Jesse C. Little in Washington, D.C. The advantages to the Mormons were: (1) It provided desperately needed capital for the exodus; (2) It gave them permission from the government to establish temporary settlements on Indian lands; (3) It would establish them as the first to set foot in California; and, (4) It confirmed to the United States Government that the members of the Church continued to be loyal to their country. It was determined by Brigham Young that the men of the Battalion would not be divided and if Captain Allen was not able to continue in command, Jefferson Hunt would then assume leadership of the Mormon Battalion. (see *Church History In The Fulness of Times*. [1989], 315-316; also Michael N. Landon and Brandon J. Metcalf. *The Remarkable Journey of the Mormon Battalion*. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2012, 17-18).

Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards went east to Mount Pisgah to assist in the recruitment of the Battalion members. Due to the efforts of the apostles, the skepticism was addressed and the recruitment was successful.

Michael N. Landon and Brandon J. Metcalf state,

"While visiting the Saints, Kane become deathly ill and was nursed back to health by Church members. He never forgot that kindness, and it undoubtedly strengthened his resolve to defend and assist the Mormons in the years ahead." (*The Remarkable Journey of the Mormon Battalion*. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2012, 22-23).

Church History in the Fulness of Times states,

"Church leaders promised that the families of the volunteers would be carefully provided for. Brigham Young selected the officers over each company and counseled them to be fathers to the rest of the men. He also counseled the volunteers to be faithful soldiers, keep the commandments, and abide by the counsel of their leaders. He promised them that if they conducted themselves properly, they would not have to fight. A farewell ball was held in honor of the battalion on a cleared square along the Missouri River on

the evening of Saturday, 18 July. At noon on Tuesday 21 July, [1846], they began their historic march." (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 316).

F. Brooklyn Saints

Our Heritage states,

"While most of the Saints moved to the Rocky Mountains by traveling overland from Nauvoo, a group of Saints from the Eastern United States traveled by a sea route. On 4 February 1846, 70 men, 68 women, and 100 children boarded the ship *Brooklyn* and sailed from New York harbor on a 17,000 mile journey to the coast of California. During their voyage two children were born, named Atlantic and Pacific, and 12 people died.

"The six month trip was very difficult. The passengers were closely crowded in the heat of the tropics, and they had only bad food and water. After rounding Cape Horn, they stopped on the island of Juan Fernandez to rest for five days. Caroline Augusta Perkins recalled that 'the sight of and tread upon terra firma once more was such a relief from the ship life, that they gratefully realized and enjoyed it.' They bathed and washed their clothing in the fresh water, gathered fruit and potatoes, caught fish and eels, and rambled about the island..

"On 31 July 1846, after a voyage marked by severe storms, dwindling food, and long days of sailing, they arrived at [Yerba Buena] San Francisco. Some stayed and established a colony called New Hope, while others traveled east over the mountains to join the Saints in the Great Basin." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 74-75).

II. The Lord Instructed the Saints Regarding Their Physical Preparation For Their Journey

Church History in the Fulness of Times states,

"By the end of [September, 1846]...a town of 820 lots had been laid out and some lots spoken for. Winter Quarters, [Nebraska] as the Brethren called the community, came into being...In 1846-1847, [between the Missouri and Platte

Rivers], there were about twelve thousand Church members scattered throughout the country...approximately four thousand were in Winter Quarters." (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 317).

Our Heritage adds,

"[Along with 3,500 to 4,000 Saints in Winter Quarters],...as many as 2,500 Saints also lived in and around what was called Kaneshville [Council Bluffs], on the Iowa side of the Missouri River." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 71).

Richard E. Bennett states,

"Palmyra, New York, is revered in song and pageant as the cradle of Mormonism; Kirtland, Ohio, is ever remembered for its templed lot; Nauvoo, Illinois, is a restorationist's showcase. But too long neglected are Winter Quarters and its successor, Kaneshville-headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for more than two years and home to thousands of Latter-day Saints." ("Winter Quarters At The Missouri River," in *History of the Saints: The Great Mormon Exodus and the Establishment of Zion*. Glen Rawson, Dennis Lyman, and Bryant Bush. General Editor, William G. Hartley. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, Inc., 2012, 51).

Richard E. Bennett continues,

"The most trying test of Brigham Young's leadership surely came that first year at the Bluffs when exhaustion and fatigue, malnutrition, exposure, and disease began to decimate the ranks of the settlers. Surely it was all bound to catch up with them sooner or later. Their hasty wintry exodus from Nauvoo, the exhausting trek across Iowa, the endless spring storms, their insufficient provisions and scanty diet, their inadequate winter shelter, and the unhealthy riverbank encampments were not conducive to good health. While the majority of deaths before the year's end were caused by exposure, those in the winter and spring of 1847 resulted from vitamin, protein, and other dietary insufficiencies.

"Before that first year was over, at least 723 would die in Winter Quarters and across the river and in some of the smaller Mormon Iowa settlements. At least 300 died the next year, pushing the mortality rate far above normal levels.

"The most remarkable result of the disease was not merely that they survived, but that for the most part they did so with such faith and allegiance. While some left the camps and returned to their former homes and ways of life, the overwhelming majority stayed on, confident in Brigham Young's leadership, in their religion, and in their own commitments. Never before or perhaps since has so large a proportion of the total Church membership been so tried. The tragedy of Winter Quarters steeled them for what yet lay ahead. They had come this far--and nothing would stop them from reaching their destination." ("Winter Quarters At The Missouri River," in History of the Saints: The Great Mormon Exodus and the Establishment of Zion. Glen Rawson, Dennis Lyman, and Bryant Bush. General Editor, William G. Hartley. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, Inc., 2012, 60-63).

Our Heritage continues,

"Life in these settlements was almost as challenging as it had been on the trail. In the summer they suffered from malarial fever. When winter came and fresh food was no longer available, they suffered from cholera epidemics, scurvy, toothaches, night blindness, and severe diarrhea. Hundreds of people died.

"Yet life went on. The women spent their days cleaning, ironing, washing, quilting, writing letters, preparing their few provisions for meals, and caring for their families..

"The men worked together and met often to discuss travel plans and the future site for the settlement of the Saints. They regularly cooperated in rounding up the herds...They worked in the fields, guarded the perimeters of the settlement, constructed and operated a flour mill, and readied wagons for travel... Some of their work was an unselfish labor of love as they prepared fields and planted crops to be harvested by the Saints who would follow them...

"Only the faith and dedication of the Saints carried them through the trying times." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 71-72).

*How have you been blessed by persevering during a time of hardship?

During those times in my life "when the going got tough," I became even more determined that I would not fail. My mother use to tell me to remember "I was a Magillacudhy." I didn't know anyone whose last name was "Magillacudy," but I did know they must be special. I also knew they hadn't quit and neither should I, even when times got difficult.

*How can persevering in a time of difficulty help those who come after us?

I believe it sets an example for those who come after and may help them when they are ready to give up. They may think, "So and so made it, I can to. The opposite example may also holds true. They may think, "If so and so gave up," it must also mean that giving up is not such a bad thing to do. I also have found when I experienced difficult times, it was then my heroes become real important.

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

"At Winter Quarters [now Nebraska] in January 1847, President Brigham Young received a revelation concerning the Saints' westward journey. This revelation is recorded in D&C 136. (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 197).

The Doctrine and Covenants states,

"[In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 136 states] The word and the will of the Lord, given through President Brigham Young at Winter Quarters, the camp of Israel, Omaha Nation, on the west bank of the Missouri River, near Council Bluffs, Iowa." (*Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 282).

*What instructions did the Lord give the Saints regarding preparations for their journey?

"a. Make a 'covenant and promise to keep all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:2 [underline added]

2 Let all the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and those who journey with them, be organized into companies, with a covenant and promise to keep all the commandments and statutes of the Lord our God.

"b. Organize companies under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve, with a president and two counselors and with captains of hundreds, fifties, and tens.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:3 [underline added]

3 Let the companies be organized with captains of hundreds, captains of fifties, and captains of tens, with a president and his two counselors at their head, under the direction of the Twelve Apostles.

*How is this organization similar to the way wards and stakes are organized?

In the stakes, the organization of the Stake Presidency is the same; in the wards, it is a Bishop with his two counselors. The numbers vary, but each individual is assigned an age appropriate group, ie., Priesthood Quorums, Relief Society, Young Men and Young Women, and Primary. The Bishop reports to the Stake President, and the Stake President reports ultimately to the Twelve Apostles and in turn, the First Presidency.

"c. Let each company provide themselves with all...they can.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:5

5 Let each company provide themselves with all the teams, wagons, provisions, clothing, and other necessities for the journey, that they can.

*Why is it important that we strive to be self-sufficient?

When we are self-sufficient as individuals, couples, or families, we are then in a better position to contribute our excess to assist others. We have the blessing of being able to assist those who may be in need.

"d. Prepare for those who are to tarry [remain behind]."

Doctrine and Covenants 136:6

6 When the companies are organized let them go to with their might, to prepare for those who are to tarry.

*What preparations did the Saints make for those who remained behind?

In Doctrine and Covenants 136, verses seven and nine, they are instructed to "put in [the] spring crop," and, "prepare the fields for raising grain" so that they, as well as those who will follow, will have food to eat. Those who follow will then be able to spend their time and energy preparing for the journey west.

"e. Care for the poor, the widows, [and] the fatherless.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:8 [underline added]

8 Let each company bear an equal proportion, according to the dividend of their property, in taking the poor, the widows, the fatherless, and the families of those who have gone into the army, that the cries of the widow and the fatherless come not up into the ears of the Lord against this people.

This counsel from the Lord concerned not only the care of the poor, widows, and fatherless, but also the families of those who were serving in the Mormon Battalion.

*How can we fulfill these responsibilities today?

Today, it is the Home teachers and Visiting teachers of the Priesthood and the Relief Society respectively who have the responsibility to attend to the needs of the families that are under their care. Part of their responsibility is to notify their leaders so the Bishop may be informed. He can

then determine if further assistance is needed. We also have the responsibility to care for our brothers and sisters, regardless of our assignment.

"f. Let every man use his influence and property to remove this people to...a stake of Zion."

Doctrine and Covenants 136:10

10 Let every man use all his influence and property to remove this people to the place where the Lord shall locate a stake of Zion.

(a-f. *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 197).

*How can this instruction apply to us?

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

"This was the true principle of consecration. All 'influence' that is all property, all talents, all strength, all that a soul had were to be enlisted in the cause of Zion." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 1134).

If we truly are our brother's keeper, as the Lord inferred to Cain after he had killed his brother, Able, then we are responsible to use our means and talents to care for our brothers and sisters when they are in need. We are also individually responsible to assist in building the kingdom of God on earth.

III. The Lord Instructed the Saints Regarding Their Conduct

The following verses address the instructions the Lord gave the Saints regarding how they should conduct themselves.

"a. If any man shall seek to build up himself, and seeketh not my counsel, he shall have no power.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:19 [underline added]

19 And if any man shall seek to build up himself, and seeketh not my counsel, he shall have no power, and his folly shall be made manifest.

When we seek our own aggrandizement, the spirit of the Lord is grieved. [see D&C 121:37.] All that we as individuals accomplish during our mortal journey, is the direct result of the blessings of the Lord in our lives. If we fail to acknowledge His power in our lives, or worse, believe that our achievements are our own, the Lord is grieved, and withdraws His Spirit. He does so that we might know for ourselves our dependence upon Him. As He does so, we become acutely aware of our dependence on His care.

*Why would humility be important to the Saints on their journey?

If we believe that we know more than our leaders, we will have difficulty in following their counsel and direction. We may then not only put our own safety in peril, but our actions, will negatively impact others around us.

*How do people sometimes seek to build themselves up?

We do so by failing to follow counsel; by constantly challenging the direction of their leaders; and, by boasting of our own accomplishments to others. In this manner we not only seek to build ourselves up, but we also fail to follow or give heed to the counsel the Lord has to give us.

*How can we more fully seek the Lord's glory rather than our own?

The simple response is to give our full support to our leaders, trusting that if they need reproof, they will receive it from the Lord Himself. We should never seek to build up ourselves, but instead quietly seek to lift others who stand in need. It is also important that we always express our gratitude to the Lord for His seen as well as unseen blessings in our lives.

"b. Keep yourselves from evil to take the name of the Lord in vain.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:21

21 Keep yourselves from evil to take the name of the Lord in vain, for I am the Lord your God, even the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.

*Why is it important that we treat the Lord's name with reverence?

When we use profanity, we offend the Lord. We have broken one of the Ten Commandments, and stand condemned before the Lord.

OT, Exodus 20:7

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

We also demean ourselves before others. We demonstrate a lack of control over our emotions when we resort to verbal expressions of our rage. We are surely in need of repentance.

"c. Cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another...Let your words tend to edify one another.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:23-24

23 Cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another.

24 Cease drunkenness; let your words tend to be edifying one another.

*How do contentions and evil speaking hinder us as a people?

When we are contentious or speak evil regarding others, we become an emotional burden to those around us. No longer are we uplifting, but instead we are adding to the collective burden of the group. We not only pull others down emotionally, but also ourselves.

*How can we overcome contentions with each others?

We can ask ourselves how would the Lord deal with us if we were guilty of the same indiscretions? He would express His love for us. He would counsel us to go to the individual in private and attempt to resolve our differences with them. We then should confess and ask forgiveness of the other person for holding onto these feelings and not letting them go. If the individual refuses to forgive us, then we should leave the matter in the hands of the Lord, and speak no more of it. Above all, we must be kind and forgiving toward all for that is what Jesus asks of us as His disciples. (see New Testament, Matthew 5:24; 7:5, 12; and, D&C 64:9-11.)

*What can we do to edify each other?

As we overlook the faults of others; as we seek to lift up and strengthen those around us; as we are obedient to all the commandments, we then truly reflect the light of Jesus Christ to others.

"d. Return borrowed or lost items.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:25-26

25 If thou borrowest of thy neighbor, thou shalt restore that which thou hast borrowed; and if thou canst not repay then go straightway and tell thy neighbor, lest he condemn thee.

26 If thou shalt find that which thy neighbor has lost, thou shalt make diligent search till thou shalt deliver it to him again.

If we borrow from our neighbors, it is important that we hastily return it to them. If we have lost the item, we are then responsible to inform them and to replace it. Initially, our neighbor trusted us to return the item when he determined to loaned it to us. We should always be faithful to their trust in us.

"e. Be diligent in preserving what thou hast.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:27

27 Thou shalt be diligent in preserving what thou

hast, that thou mayest be a wise steward; for it is the free gift of the Lord thy God, and thou art his steward.

*What do you think it means to be a 'wise steward'?

We have been called to the Lord's service. He trusts us to fulfill the responsibilities He has given us to the best of our ability. It is important that we do so by using wisdom and prudence in carrying out our assignments. If we are slothful in our duty, or do not do as the Lord has instructed us, we are no longer fit servants for his service. Not only may we be relieved of our stewardship, but we will also lose our reward.

*How can our stewardship over physical possessions affect our spiritual well-being?

If we are not wise in the choice and use of our physical and temporal possessions, we will likely also become neglectful regarding our spiritual well-being. Satan is concerned about of physical possessions as well as our spiritual well-being. He is very subtle in blinding us in order to affect our spiritual development. It often begins with our not saying our daily prayers, then our becoming lax regarding the keeping of our covenants, followed by our sporadic church attendance at church. We then find fault with our leaders. While the possibility of inactivity may have initially seemed remote in our thoughts, by our continuous neglect of our spiritual well-being, it may become our reality.

"f. Important to engage in appropriate recreation.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:28

28 If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

In the past, the group expression of joy and pleasure by God's children has often become the opportunity for inappropriate expression or action by the participants to occur in the name of "having fun." One example of this behavior is recorded in the Book of Mormon. It occurred

after Lehi and his group had departed by ship for the promised land.

B/M, 1 Nephi 18:9-10

9 And after we had been driven forth before the wind for the space of many days, behold, my brethren and the sons of Ishmael and also their wives began to make themselves merry, insomuch that they began to dance, and to sing, and to speak with much rudeness, yea even that they did forget by what power they had been brought thither; yea, they were lifted up unto exceeding rudeness.

10 And I, Nephi, began to fear exceedingly lest the Lord should be angry with us, and smite us because of our iniquity, that we should be swallowed up in the depths of the sea; wherefore, I, Nephi, began to speak to them with much soberness; but behold they were angry with me, saying, We will not that our younger brother shall be a ruler over us.

It is not uncommon that when an individual urges group restraint, they then become the focus of the group's displeasure. Collectively, they object to their actions being curtailed in any manner. They want to do what they want without any interference.

David O. McKay states,

"On the plains, after a day's march, the wagons were drawn up in a circle, a man with a violin would take his place by the campfire and then on the prairie the sturdy pioneers would join hands in a dance, opening it by prayer, and participate in amusement that fostered the spirit of the gospel...President Brigham Young...once said, in substance: 'The atmosphere of the dance should be such that if any elder be called from the party to go to administer to a sick person, [which required the elder to be clean and pure in word and deed], he could leave with the same spirit that he would go from his elder's quorum meeting.'" (*Conference Report*, April 1920, 117).

*How can we apply this counsel?

We should never engage in any activity that would result in the departure of the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. As disciples

of Jesus Christ, we must be prepared at all times to act as His servants on behalf of His children. Our behavior and thoughts at all times should be in keeping with the spirit of righteousness.

"g. Learn wisdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:32-33

32 Let him that is ignorant learn wisdom by humbling himself and calling upon the Lord his God, that his eyes may be opened that he may see, and his ears opened that he may hear;

33 For my Spirit is sent forth into the world to enlighten the humble and contrite, and to the condemnation of the ungodly.

*What did the Lord instruct the Saints to do to learn wisdom?

In order to learn wisdom, we must first humble ourselves. We do so by acknowledging our dependence upon the Lord for His guidance in our lives. We then, in humble prayer, call upon Him for guidance and direction. If we will do so, He will hear our petition and will give us answer to our prayers, and we will gain wisdom. Those who chose not to humble themselves before the Lord, believing themselves to be self-sufficient, do not receive the wisdom the Lord has to offer His children, even hiding knowledge.

*In what ways have you found these instructions to be true in your life?

During those occasions when I have acted as if I did not need the Lord assistance, I have failed miserably. Even when I came to a conclusion regarding how to proceed, I did not have peace of mind regarding my action.

IV. Under the Direction Of Brigham Young the Saints Journey To the Salt Lake Valley

After the Saints had spent the winter on the Missouri river, Brigham Young determined that a vanguard company would leave in the spring for the Rocky Mountains.

Joseph Smith prophesied,

"[Two years before the Prophet Joseph Smith died--August 6, 1842--he prophesied that] the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains,' [and some of them would] live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 255).

Carter E. Grant states,

"First and foremost it should be remembered that these Mormon emigrants were a select group, make up mostly of the Holy Priesthood, directed by a prophet of God--a man who continually reminded his followers that 'God and not Brigham Young' was guiding their destiny.

"While organizing the original pioneer band, Brigham Young chose 144--'twelve times twelve men.' One, however, becoming disabled, returned to Winter Quarters. Three women and two children were allowed to join the group, making 148 in all. The women were the wives of Brigham Young, Lorenzo Young, and Heber C. Kimball. The children belonged to Lorenzo Young. Three members of the company were colored, and two others were non-members of the Church." (*The Kingdom of God Restored*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955, 387-388).

They departed on Wednesday, April 14, 1847, from Winter Quarters.

Carter E. Grant continues,

"General Brigham Young, then in his prime of life--forty-five years of age and a perfect picture of rugged health--was a remarkable horseman. Usually he rode ahead of his caravan, guiding it over the easiest trails and toward accessible water and feed grounds, beyond narrow range of bluffs and willows that might furnish concealment from lurking savages.

"Praising President Young's leadership, [Edward W.] Tullidge comments: 'General Young himself marked the entire route, going in advance daily with his staff. This service

was deemed most important, as the future emigrations would follow almost in the very footprints of the pioneers." (*The Kingdom of God Restored*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955, 390).

It is of interest to note that the vanguard company travelled along the north bank of the Platte River, making their own pioneer trail. When others raised objection, offering the other side of the river and following the existing Oregon Trail, Brigham Young explained "this first pioneer vanguard was to open a new route, wholly independent of the overburdened emigrant trail. He assured the brethren that fresh grass would soon furnish feed for their own animals as well as for those in the second pioneer company, a month or so behind them.

"Twenty years after Brigham Young had opened this new route westward, federal engineers laid the grade for the first transcontinental railroad along the Mormon Trail some 543 miles from Omaha to Fort Laramie, Wyoming." (Carter E. Grant. *The Kingdom of God Restored*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955, 391).

Our Heritage states,

"Over the next two decades, approximately 62,000 Saints would follow across the prairies in wagons and handcarts to gather to Zion.

"Wonderful sights as well as hardships awaited those travelers on their journey.

"Death frequently visited the Saints as they slowly made their way west.

"Although the Saints suffered much on their journey to the Salt Lake Valley, a spirit of unity, cooperation, and optimism prevailed. Bound together by their faith and commitment to the Lord, they found joy in the midst of their trials.

"On 21 July 1847, Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow of the first pioneer company preceded the emigrants into the Salt Lake Valley. They saw grass so deep that a person could wade through it, promising land for farming, and several creeks that wandered through the valley. Three days later,

President Brigham Young, who was ill with mountain fever, was driven in his carriage to the mouth of a canyon that opened over the valley. As President Young looked over the scene, he gave his prophetic benediction to their travels: 'It is enough. This is the right place.'

"As the Saints who followed emerged from the mountains, they, too, gazed at the promise land! This valley with its salty lake gleaming in the western sun was the object of vision and prophecy, the land of which they and thousands after them dreamed. This was their land of refuge, where they would become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 75-77).

V. Sacrifices Made By the Pioneers

Thomas S. Monson states,

"Mormon pioneers by the hundreds suffered and died from disease, exposure, or starvation. There were some who, lacking wagons and teams, literally walked the 1,300 miles across the plains and through the mountains, pushing and pulling handcarts. In these groups, one in six perished.

"For many the journey didn't begin at Nauvoo, Kirtland, Far West, or New York, but rather in distant England, Scotland, Scandinavia, and Germany...Between the safety of home and the promise of Zion stood the angry and treacherous waters of the mighty Atlantic. Who can recount the fear that gripped the human heart during those perilous crossings? Prompted by the silent whisperings of the Spirit, sustained by a simple, yet abiding faith, they trusted in their God and set sail on their journey...

"On board one of those overcrowded and creaking vessels [ships] of yesteryear were my great grandparents, their tiny family, and a few meager possessions. The waves were so high, the voyage so long, the quarters so cramped. Tiny Mary [their daughter] had always been frail, but now, with the passage of each day, her anxious mother knew the little one was becoming especially weak. She had taken seriously ill...Day after day worried parents peered for land, but there was no land. Now Mary could not stand...The end drew near. Little Mary peacefully passed beyond this veil of tears.

"As the family and friends gathered on the open deck, the ship's captain directed the service, and that precious, ever-so-small body, placed tenderly in a tear-stained canvas, was committed to the angry sea. Strong father, in emotion-choked tones, comforted grieving mother, repeating, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. We'll see our Mary again!' ("Come, Follow Me," *Improvement Era*, June 1967, 55).

This experience of President Monson's great-grandparents is only one example of the price the Saints paid in order to come to Zion. Whether they drove a ox team that pulled a covered wagon, rode a horse, pushed a handcart, or walked, they came seeking a place where they could worship God according to their new found beliefs, in peace. They sought Zion, where they could be free from persecution or oppression.

*How do you feel when you consider the legacy of faith and sacrifice that the pioneers and other Saints have given us?

I am humbled by the price they paid in order to come to Zion. The sacrifice they laid on the altar demonstrates their undying faith in their Heavenly Father and their trust that even if they lost loved ones along the way, all would be well.

*What lessons can we learn from the pioneer trek to help us on our journey back to God's presence?

We too must trust our Heavenly Father that He will bless and guide us and even dry our tears along the way. If we don't give up, someday we too will overcome and return to His presence, even if the way, at times, is hard and difficult.

M. Russell Ballard states,

"Life isn't always easy. At some point in our journey we may feel much as the pioneers did as they crossed Iowa--up to our knees in mud, forced to bury some of our dreams along the way. We all face rocky ridges, with the wind in our face and winter coming on too soon. Sometimes it seems as though there is no end to the dust that stings our eyes

and clouds our vision. Sharp edges of despair and discouragement jolt out of the terrain to slow our passage. ...Occasionally we reach the top of our summit in life, as the pioneers did, only to see more mountain peaks ahead, higher and more challenging than the one we have just traversed. Tapping unseen reservoirs of faith and endurance, we, as did our forbearers, inch ever forward toward the day when our voices can join with those of all pioneers who have endured in faith, singing, 'All is well! All is well!' ("You Have Nothing to Fear From the Journey," *Ensign*, May 1997, 59).

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

"...In many ways our journey toward eternal life is similar to the journey of the pioneers across America. The pioneers crossed the plains at profound personal sacrifice and often under severe hardship. Demonstrating great faith, courage, and endurance, they set an example for us to follow.

"...This is our day in the history of the kingdom of God on the earth. The pioneers laid the foundation, but it is now up to us to complete the work." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 200).

James E. Faust states,

"Faith in every future footstep will fulfill prophetic vision concerning the glorious destiny of this Church." ("Pioneers of the Future: Be Not Afraid, Only Believe," in *Ensign*, November 1997, 42).

M. Russell Ballard adds,

"We are the inheritors of a tremendous heritage. Now it is our privilege and responsibility to be part of the Restoration's continuing drama, and there are great and heroic stories of faith to be written in our day. It will require every bit of our strength, wisdom, and energy to overcome the obstacles that will confront us. But even that will not be enough. We will learn, as did our pioneer ancestors, that it is only in faith--real faith, whole-souled, tested and tried--that we will find safety and

confidence as we walk our own perilous pathways through life.

"We are all bound together—19th-and 20th century pioneers and more—in our great journey to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and to allow His atoning sacrifice to work its miracle in our lives." ("You Have Nothing To Fear From The Journey," in *Ensign*, May 1997, 61).

We may not have to ford streams, or suffer exposure to the elements with only tattered clothes, and no coat, or experience the hunger pangs of an empty stomach. We will, however, be required to stand tall in the face of opposition to our beliefs; or say "No," to temptations, and to always be morally clean. We will also each have to exercise our faith and follow our leaders. We must, like those who went before us, be steadfast and immovable in keeping our covenants. Our destination, like those who went before us, is to follow the path that leads to the Celestial Kingdom. There we will finally be united, along with our loved ones, with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ forever.

VI. Conclusions

As I consider the journey of the pioneers and their sacrifices, I stand in awe of their fortitude and perseverance, in the face of hardship and discouragement. They are an example to me, as I too, follow the path to return to my Heavenly Father.

As the Saints crossed Iowa, they faced wet weather that served to bogged down their wagons and hindered their pace. While their experiences were extremely difficult, it served to forge their strength and perseverance. It was in the journey in Iowa, that the hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," was written.

It was also in Iowa that way stations were conceived. How important they were to those who would follow after them, making their journey easier. It is also important for us to be aware of those who will come after us. We must remember that we each have the responsibility to pass good to others.

Finally, they reached the Missouri River. Here they would build a community at Winter Quarters and Council Bluffs (later Kaneshville) that would serve as the headquarters of the Church. It was an important resting place for the Saints as they gained strength before pressing forward. It was from here that Brigham Young and the Vanguard Company will departed on April 14, 1847.

We must also not forget the 500 men of the Mormon Battalion who volunteered to serve their country, who had previously ignored their pleas for assistance. How easy it would have been to let past anger and resentment prevent the Saints from enlisting and missing the blessings the Lord provided to the Saints by their service. They were faithful and were protected, as promised, from battle.

Others on their journey crossed the ocean. One group, did not cross the plains, but instead came by ship. Known as the "Brooklyn Saints," they came around Cape Horn at the tip of South America also experiencing difficulty in their trials. Hardship and sickness beset their journey.

Travel by ship was not easy as many will learn. Part of their journey to Zion will require them to cross the Atlantic Ocean from their former homes in Europe. Here sickness, storms, and the death of loved ones will occur.

The Lord Instructs the Saints Regarding Their Physical Preparation For Their Journey: It was at Winter Quarters that the Saints, while preparing to go west, experienced a most difficult time. In both summer and winter, illness prevailed. The lack of adequate nourishment, their difficult journey, combined with local disease took its toll on the Saints physically.

In January, 1847, Brigham Young receive a revelation from the Lord. It will become known as Section 136. The Saints received important counsel. They were to: (a) Make a covenant and promise to keep all commandments and statutes of the Lord; (b) To organizes into companies under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve, each with a President and two counselors with captains over 100's, 50's, and 10's; (c) Let each company provide, as they can, themselves with teams, wagons, provisions, clothing, and other necessities; (d) Prepare for those who are to remain behind; (e) Care for the poor, widows, and fatherless,

including the families of the Mormon Battalion members; and, (f) Let every man use influence and property to remove the people to Zion. In other words, practice the law of concentration.

The Lord Instructed Regarding Their Conduct: The Lord was not only concerned regarding their physical preparation, but also their spiritual and personal conduct. They were counseled: (a) If any man seek to build himself up, and seeketh not my counsel, he shall have no power; (b) Keep yourselves from evil by not taking the name of the Lord in vain; (c) Cease to contend one with another, cease to speak evil one of another, cease drunkenness, let your words tend to be edifying one to another; (d) Return borrowed or lost items; (e) Be diligent in preserving what one hast; (f) Engage in appropriate recreation; and, (g) Learn wisdom. Surely adherence to this direction of the Lord served to provide guidelines for the members that would invite the Spirit of the Lord as the companies made their journey west.

Under the Direction of Brigham Young the Saints Journey To the Salt Lake Valley: A vanguard company was selected by Brigham Young. 143 men, plus three women, and two children were assembled for a total of 148 individuals to make the trip west. While Brigham Young had been given sufficient revelation as to the appearance of the promised destination, the directions were likely given as the company proceeded. Brigham Young rode at the head of the caravan and marked out the path they were to follow. Over the next twenty years, approximately 62,000 Saints followed the trail to Zion. On July 24, 1847, Brigham Young and the main company arrived at the Salt Lake Valley. It had taken the company 111 days to cover the 1,050 miles from Winter Quarter, [Neberaska].

Sacrifice Made By the Pioneers: Thomas S. Monson shares a moving experience of his great-grandparents as they made their way to Zion. They had left their native Scandinavia to make their journey to join the Saints in Zion. The price they paid to join the Saints, like many, was not without sacrifice and sorrow.

Like those before us, we too will experience setback and discouragement. In order to complete our journey will also require our perseverance and sacrifice. If we will exercise

our faith, even in our every footstep, we will receive our reward.

Our next lesson [D&C#35} will address the Handcart project, and especially the rescue of the Martin and Willie handcart companies. We will come to understand the legacy they left and the lessons for us to learn from their rescue.