

Obedience Is Greater than Sacrifice

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Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

It is a joy for me to be with you today. I do not have this opportunity very often.

You are going on a remarkable calling where the husband has been set apart as a president and a missionary and his wife as a companion to him as a missionary. There is no greater calling, I believe, in the Church. For you will be able to get close to your Heavenly Father, to teach and to testify together, to study, to pray, and have an opportunity to make a difference.

In the Bible it says, “And of some have compassion, making a difference.”¹ You have that compassion. You may not realize it, but you have been raised your whole life to prepare yourself for this calling. Everything you have done has been in preparation.

Now, one of the key elements I want to talk to you about is that obedience is greater than sacrifice. This Samuel taught Saul when he disobeyed. What you have to understand is, even with all of your missionaries—I had missionaries, a prima ballerina from Finland, a concert pianist, a professional athlete, those who left a sweetheart at home, even a truck which they loved, whatever it might be—they sacrificed. But in all of this, what you have to remember is what it means and how it is taught.

I would like to take you to 2 Nephi 31. In the first part of this chapter it is quite remarkable in that Nephi is bearing his testimony. In the tenth verse it reads: “And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?” That of obedience. That is so we have the Spirit to be with us.

You are going find the most critical elements for your missionaries are to be obedient and to be able to have the Spirit to be with them and to work, as it says in the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, with all of their “heart, might, mind and strength.”² This is not a journey for the weak.

Rarely do we have the Father and Son being quoted and teaching at the same time.

“And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son.

“And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do.

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water [of baptism].”³

And then it speaks of if Jesus needed to be baptized being perfect, why then must we be baptized? And then you have to begin to realize there must be more to baptism than just the removal of sins, and then it gives an explanation of what it means.

“But, behold, my beloved brethren, thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying: After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by the baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, and can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the tongue of angels, and after this should deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not known me.”⁴

I want to say something to you that is very important. Baptism is not a number. Baptism is someone taking upon them the name of the Savior. When it says “it would have been better for you that ye had not known me,” as a mission president that rang in my ears. I made my elders know that one must be prepared for baptism.

In the Doctrine and Covenants it says, “And if it 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!”⁵

In Matthew, “Enter ye in at the strait gate.”⁶ That strait, S-T-R-A-I-T, is very important. It means narrow. It means that it is not easy. It is like the eye, when it speaks of the camel going through the wall in Jerusalem where they had to get down and go through. This is a gate. Then it says, “for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

“Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life,”—that means eternal life—“and few there be that find it.”⁷ This ties in, of course, with 1 Nephi 8.

After Matthew, it is interesting, in Luke, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”⁸

There will be many that the elders will teach wherein the last moments they will not come and be ready for baptism.

Now, in 2 Nephi 31:17–21, I will start this out and then I will show you on a blackboard how you can do this and draw it up. In the seventeenth verse it states and it has been “shown unto me, that ye might know the gate.”

That gate is baptism. In the Bible they did not say what it was, but here this is what Nephi teaches us. “For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins.”

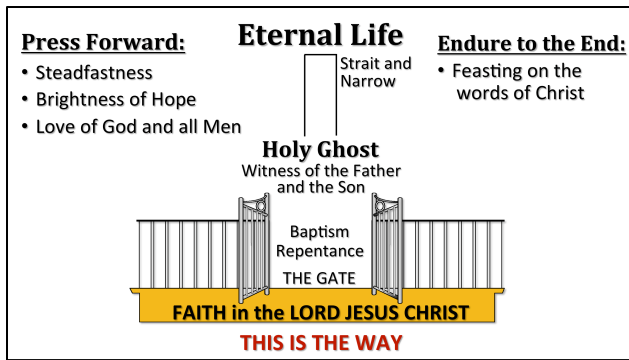
If you will notice as you read, you can see the gate, you can see repentance and baptism, and then it goes on to say:

“Ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which

witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive.

“And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path,”—and that is the path which is shown leading to eternal life, that the Holy Ghost, which witnesses [to us about] the Father and the Son, it tells us—“I would ask if all is done?...[and] say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him.”⁹

Faith is the foundation upon which we build. Faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, is the preparatory gospel. It is what is necessary to enter into the kingdom of God.



Then, once you are there, you go forward and find the other gates—the gate of the temple and then the heavenly gate of the celestial kingdom.

To remember the gates, we have the womb. That is the gate by which you enter into the world. Then you have the gate of baptism, the gate of the temple, and then the gate of heaven.



It is so interesting to me, when it says here, “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ,” the scriptures, “and endure to the end,”—which is essential—“behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”¹⁰

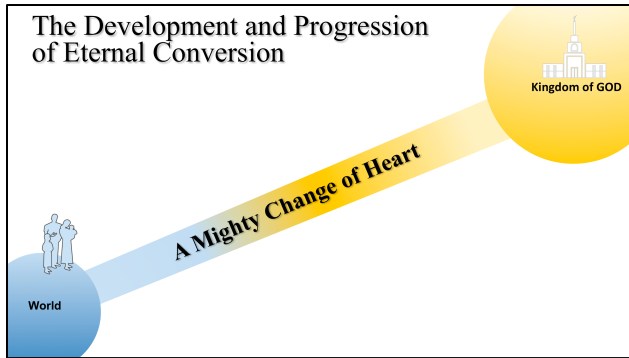
And then in the twenty-first verse: “This is the way; and there is none other way.”

That is really what our missionaries are doing. They are bringing people to Christ. It is interesting to me what Elder Nelson taught about the temple, and I want to thank him for that.

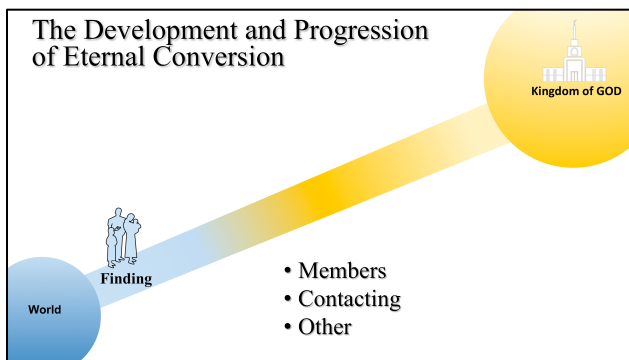
Let me tell you how simple it is. Many of your elders will think they went to the temple on the way to their mission. It is completely the reverse. They went to the temple to learn the law of consecration so that they might then come on their mission and give it all of their heart, might, mind, and strength, everything they possess.

The development and progression of what I will call eternal conversion, because baptism and the temple means that it is eternal if we do all that we are asked to do—get our endowments, our covenants, remain faithful, and endure to the end.

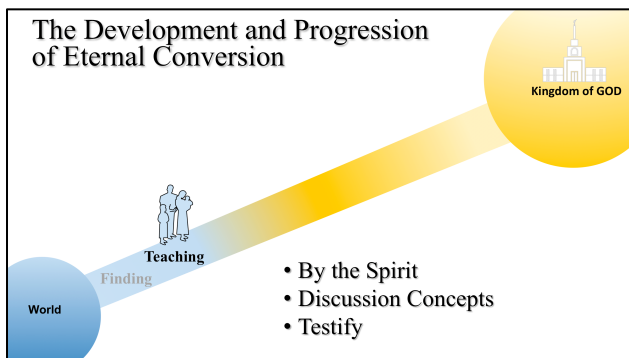
Isn't it interesting, this mighty change of heart to bring one from the world into the kingdom.



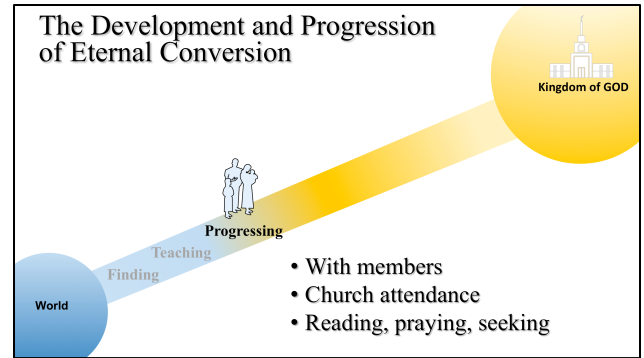
The journey starts with finding—through members, contacting, and of course social media and what is coming in our world.



After the finding, there is the teaching by the Spirit—discussion concepts that are taught and understood, where we ask them to read the scriptures and we testify to them, and then they feel the Spirit.



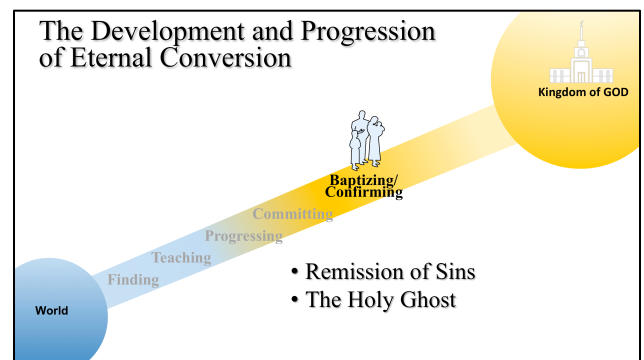
And then progressing with members, attending church, reading, praying, seeking. It is remarkable to me the progress.



We always asked that the members be to the baptism and to be part of the teaching process, but also we asked the investigators to come to church on their own during this progressing process so that when the elders were not there they could stand on their own.

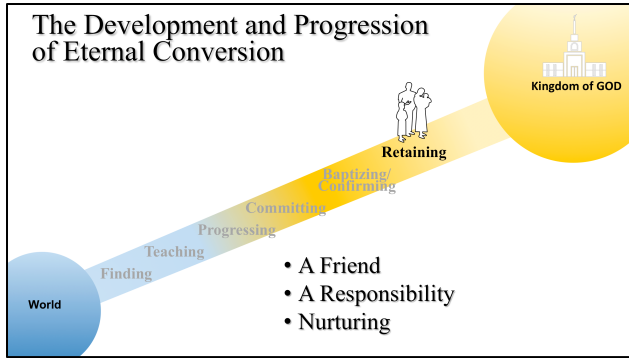
Then, of course, committing, faith and repentance, and all that is taught in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37.

Baptizing and confirming, that they might have the Holy Ghost and the remission of their sins and to be able to take the law of obedience at baptism and be true and faithful.

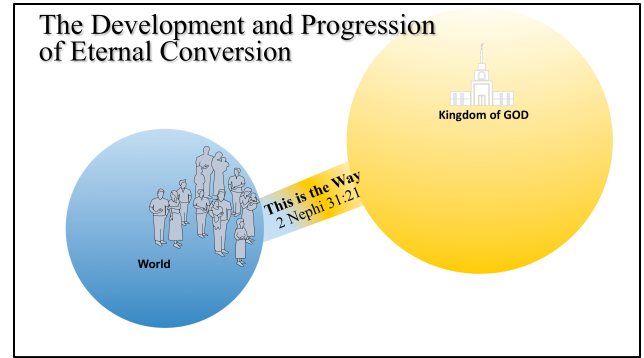


After their baptism and confirming, that they might have a friend, a responsibility, hopefully a calling; that they might have the priesthood; that they might have nurturing; that they

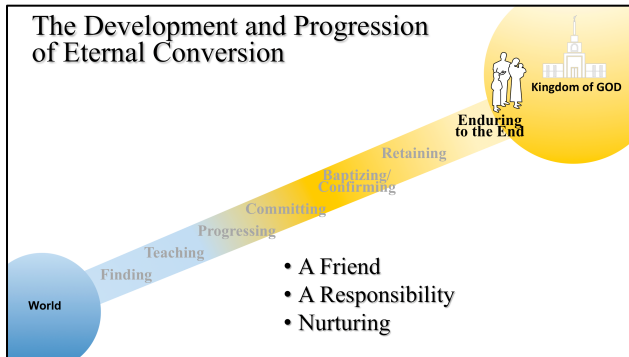
might understand the Relief Society, and the Young Men and the Young Women.



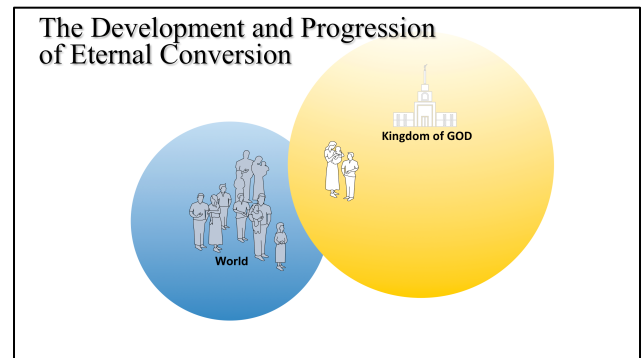
Then we have the kingdom. It is no longer a bridge with a long journey.



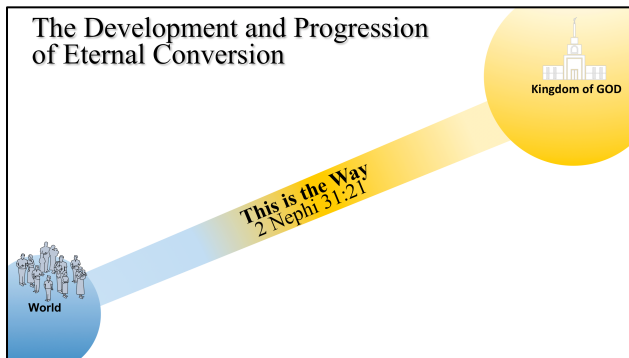
Then, there is that enduring to the end.



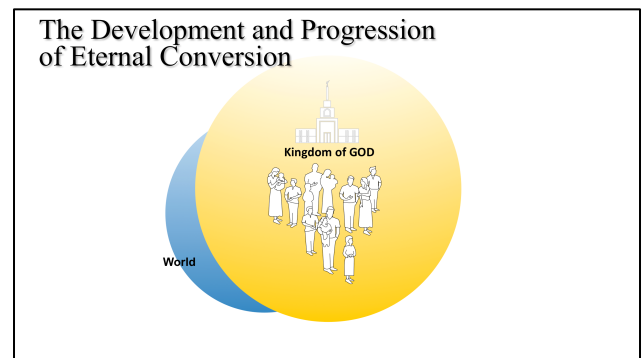
We bring the kingdom of God closer to the world. It is like an eclipse.



Having said that, this is the way and the only way.



As they come closer, the kingdom of God takes over their life and who they are. They are truly in the world but not of the world.



I ask blessings to be with you, that you may have the opportunity to be able to feel the Spirit in such a way that when you preach, the Spirit will be felt. Then in this kingdom of God, and with the family, and with the temple, that they may be able to have.

I would like to conclude with something that I learned. As a fighter pilot I had on the side of

our airplane, “Return with honor.” I ask the Lord’s blessings to be with you and each of your missionaries, that they might go into the mission field, and that you might go and give all that you have to your Father, that you may be nurtured and blessed, that your families will be protected. May the Lord’s choicest blessings be with you, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

¹ Jude 1:22.

² Doctrine and Covenants 4:2.

³ 2 Nephi 31:11–13.

⁴ 2 Nephi 31:14.

⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 18:15.

⁶ Matthew 7:13.

⁷ Matthew 7:13–14.

⁸ Luke 13:24.

⁹ 2 Nephi 31:18–19.

¹⁰ 2 Nephi 31:20.