

## Christ – Our Mediator Outline - Mike Baird

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**##== Slide - "Then is his grace sufficient for you" ==##**

**##== Slide - Topics ==##**

### **Sin, transgression, Law of Justice, and the Fall**

**##== Slide - Sin and Transgression ==##**

#### ***Sin & Transgression***

- If there is no law – there is no sin
  - 2 Nephi 2:13  
"if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin"
  - Alma 42:17  
" How could he sin if there was no law"
- However there is a law given
- Sin is transgression of the law
  - 1 John 3:4  
"for sin is the transgression of the law"
- Sin & transgression –difference defined here for this discussion only
  - Scriptures are not consistent in distinction as defined here
  - Sin – violation of law
    - willfully
    - knowingly
  - Transgression – violation of law
    - In ignorance
      - Romans 2:12  
"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish"

without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law"

- Joseph Smith:  
"those who have lived without law, will be judged without law, and those who have a law, will be judged by that law" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg 218)
- With lack of accountability
  - D&C 29:47  
"Wherefore, they cannot sin, for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me"
  - Moroni 8:8  
"little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin"

### **##== Slide – Law of Justice ==##**

#### ***Law of Justice***

- Violation of law brings punishment
  - Alma 42:22  
"there is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment"
  - Elder Bruce R McConkie:  
"According to the terms and conditions of the great plan of redemption, justice demands that a penalty be paid for every violation of the Lord's laws" (Mormon Doctrine, pg 406)
- Obedience of law brings blessing
  - D&C 130:20-21  
"when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated"
- Man punished for his own sins
  - Articles of Faith:2  
"We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression"
  - D&C 101:78  
"according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that

every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment"

- Deut. 24:16

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin"

## ##== Slide – The Fall of Man ==##

### ***The Fall of Man***

- See "The Fall – outline" by Mike Baird  
( <http://mikebaird.net/Church/GospelTopics/FallThe.pdf> )
- Effects of the Fall
  - Physical Death
  - Spiritual Death

### **Unconditional aspect of the Atonement**

- All are resurrected (overcome Physical Death)
  - 1 Cor 15:22  
"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"
- All brought back to presence of the Father for judgment (Spiritual Death)
  - Remaining in the presence of the Father is conditional
  - 2 Nephi 9:38  
"wo unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and behold his face, and remain in their sins"
  - Alma 40:11  
"the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life"
- Those guilty of "transgression" but not "sin"
  - Ignorantly sinned
    - Mosiah 3:11  
"his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned"
  - Little Children
    - D&C 137:10  
"I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven"
    - Moroni 8:22  
"all little children are alive in Christ"
- Those of mental capacity such that they can not understand
  - D&C 29:49-50  
"again, I say unto you, that whoso having knowledge, have I not commanded to repent?"

And he that hath no understanding, it remaineth in me to do according as it is written"

- Joseph Fielding Smith:

" The Lord has made it known by revelation that children born with retarded minds shall receive blessings just like little children who die in infancy. They are free from sin, because their minds are not capable of a correct understanding of right and wrong. ...

Therefore The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints considers all deficient children with retarded capacity to understand, just the same as little children under the age of accountability. They are redeemed without baptism and will go to the celestial kingdom of God, there, we believe, to have their faculties or other deficiencies restored according to the Father's mercy and justice" (Answers to Gospel Questions, 3:20)

### **##== Slide – Fall of Me ==##**

#### **"Fall of Me"**

- Term "Fall of Me" is not doctrinal but a convenient expression for describing our separation from God because of *our* sins. This expression comes from Elder Gerald Lund of the 2nd Quorum of 70 (Salvation: By Grace or by Works, Ensign Apr 1981, pg 7)
- All born separated from God because of Adam's transgression
- We remain separated because of our own fall
  - Because of our sins
- We could enter back into God's presence
  - These scriptures imply that if we could purify ourselves (overcome "fall of me") we could get back to God's presence
    - D&C 67:10, D&C 88:68, D&C 93:1, Ether 3:13
    - Involves "works"
      - Faith, repentance, obedience

### **##== Slide – Saved by our Works? ==##**

#### **Saved by Works?**

- However are we really saved by our works? - NO!
  - Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God  
Not of works, lest any man should boast"

- David O McKay:  
"I am not unmindful of the scripture that declares: "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8.) *That is absolutely true*, for man in his taking upon himself mortality was impotent to save himself." (Conference Report, April 1957, First Day—Morning Meeting 7)
- Demands of the law of Justice
  - Only takes one violation to be in debt
    - James 2:10  
"whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all"
- Only two ways to meet the demands of Justice
  - Keep the law perfectly and never get in debt
  - Pay the debt of suffering
    - We don't have the power to do this
    - Even if we could, just paying the debt would not make us Christ like (Christ was not only sinless but received grace for grace to become like his Father)
- None justified by law
  - 2 Nephi 2:5  
"And by the law no flesh is justified"
  - Romans 3:20  
"by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight"
- Only Christ kept the law perfectly
- Everyone else is in debt (Rom. 3:23)
  - Romans 3:23  
"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"

### **##== Slide – The need for Grace ==##**

#### **The need for Grace**

- Impossible for a man to be justified by his own works
- A Mediator is required to meet the demands of justice and apply mercy

### **##== Show Video – The Mediator ==##**

( <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2007-01-0005-the-mediator?lang=eng> )

- Boyd K Packer:  
"Unless there is a mediator, unless we have a friend, the full weight of justice untempered, unsympathetic, must, positively must fall on us. The

full recompense for every transgression, however minor or however deep, will be exacted from us to the uttermost farthing." (The Mediator, Ensign, May 1977, 54)

### ##== Slide - Christ – Mediator & Advocate ==##

#### **Christ – Mediator and Advocate**

- Christ kept laws of God perfectly
  - He was justified by his works
  - He avoided the debt
  - He qualified himself to return to the Father
- Through the Atonement, Christ met the demands of the law for all the rest of mankind
  - The mediator
    - 1 Timothy 2:5-6  
"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all"
    - Boyd K Packer:  
"But know this: Truth, glorious truth, proclaims there is such a Mediator... Through Him mercy can be fully extended to each of us without offending the eternal law of justice." (The Mediator, Ensign, May 1977, 54)
  - Our advocate with the Father
    - D&C 45:3-5  
"Listen to him who is the *advocate* with the Father, who is *pleading your cause* before him—  
Saying: Father, *behold* the sufferings and death of *him* who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; *behold* the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;  
Wherefore, Father, *spare these my brethren* that believe on my name, *that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.*"
    - Note:
      - In a court of law on in the USA our advocate would be holding up our sufferings, our good deeds and righteousness to plead our cause
      - Christ pleads our cause with the Father based upon his suffering and righteousness

- Gerald Lund:  
" Nothing man could do for himself could bring him past that judgment bar successfully without such an Advocate. That is why eternal life is always a gift" (Salvation: By Grace or by Works, Ensign Apr 1981, pg 7)

### ##== Slide – Conditional aspect of the Atonement ==##

#### **Conditional aspect of the Atonement**

- Grace is conditional
  - Broken heart & contrite spirit
    - 2 Nephi 2:7  
"Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a *broken heart and a contrite spirit*; and unto *none else* can the ends of the law be answered"
  - Faith, repentance, baptism, & receipt of the Holy Ghost
    - 2 Nephi 31:13
  - Endure to the end
    - 2 Nephi 31:19-20
- Faith is the principle that activates the power of the Atonement in our lives
  - We are justified through and by our faith (Gal 2:16, Rom 3:28)
    - Galations 2:16  
"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law..."
    - Romans 3:28  
"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"
  - Gerald Lund: Analogy of the Powerhouse  
"We are like a powerhouse on a mighty river. The powerhouse has no power residing in itself; the potential power rests in the energy of the river. When that source of power flows through the generators of the power plant, power is transferred from the river to the power plant and sent out into the homes (lives) of others. So it is with faith. The power to achieve justification does not reside in man. Man requires the power of the atonement of Christ flowing into him. If no power is being generated, one does not—indeed, cannot—turn the generators by hand (justification by works); but rather, an effort is made to remove those things which have



blocked the power from flowing into the generators (working righteousness as a result of faith). With this background then, one can understand why the scriptures clearly stress that faith includes works (see James 2:17-26); that is, obedience, commitment, and repentance—these are the works of faith that open up the channels so that the power of the atoning sacrifice of Christ can flow into us, redeem us from sin, and bring us back into the presence of God. Disobedience and wickedness dam those channels. (How literal is the word damnation!) The righteous works in themselves do not save us. The atoning power of God saves us. But our righteous works, activated by our faith in the Savior, are the condition for the operation of that power. Thus, each of us has something to say about whether he will be able to seek the gift and power of the Atonement in his behalf." (Salvation: By Grace or by Works, Ensign Apr 1981, pg 7)

- Grace in our lives is not an event – it is a process!

### **=== Slide – How do I earn it? ===**

#### ***Grace can not be earned or purchased***

- It is free – we can not earn or buy it
  - 2 Nephi 26:25, 2 Nephi 9:50
- "His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth" ("The Living Christ," 2)
- 2 Nephi 2:7
  - "unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit"
  - D. Todd Christofferson
    - "it is not that we earn these gifts, but rather that we choose to seek and accept" ("Justification and Sanctification", Ensign, June 2001, 18)

### **=== Slide – We are saved by Grace ===**

#### ***We are saved by grace***

- See "Salvation by Grace – Mike Baird  
( <http://mikebaird.net/Church/GospelTopics/SalvationByGrace.pdf> )
- Saved by Christ's love from Physical Death
- Saved by Christ's love from Spiritual Death
- Saved from sin and transgression by the grace or gifts of God
  - Gerald Lund (2nd Quorum of 70):
    - "The atoning power of God unto salvation is a freely available gift from him—but our works of righteousness are essential to bring the gift into

power in our lives." (Salvation: By Grace or by Works, Ensign Apr 1981, pg 7)

**##== Slide – "Then is his grace sufficient for you" ==##**

- Ephesians 2:8-10

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"

- Glenn L. Pearson and Reid E. Bankhead

The key to understanding this statement of Paul's is in the tenth verse: It is the rebirth which creates a creature who has good works. It is not the good works of the creature which creates the rebirth. Nevertheless, a rebirth follows the exercising of faith in Christ and the experiencing of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. (Building Faith with the Book of Mormon, pg 61.)

- 2 Nephi 25:23

"for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do"

- Ezra Taft Benson

As a church, we are in accord with an ancient prophet who said, "It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (Book of Mormon, "2 Ne. 25:23; 2 Nephi 25:23.) Grace consists of God's gift to His children wherein He gave His Only Begotten Son in order that whosoever would believe in Him and comply with His laws and ordinances would have everlasting life. By grace, the Savior accomplished His atoning sacrifice so that all mankind will attain immortality. By His grace and by our faith in His atonement and our repentance of our sins, we receive the strength to do the necessary works that we otherwise could not do by our own power. By His grace, we receive an endowment of blessing and spiritual strength that may eventually lead us to eternal life if we endure to the end. By His grace, we become more like His divine personality. Yes, it is "by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." What is meant by the phrase "after all we can do"? "After all we can do" includes extending our best effort. "After all we can do" includes living His commandments. "After all we can do" includes loving our fellowmen and praying for those who regard us as their adversary. "After all we can do" means clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and giving "succor [to] those that stand in need of [our] succor" ("Mosiah 4:16; Mosiah 4:16), remembering that what we do

unto one of the least of God's children, we do unto Him ("Matt. 25:40 Matthew 25:40). "After all we can do" means leading chaste, clean, pure lives, being scrupulously honest in all our dealings, and treating others the way we would want to be treated. (Come unto Christ, 8)

- Joseph F Smith

"But when a man keeps all the law that is revealed, according to his strength, his substance, and his ability, though what he does may be little, it is just as acceptable in the sight of God as if he were able to do a thousand times more" (Gospel Doctrine pg 225)

- Stephen Robinson

At first glance at this scripture, we might think that grace is offered to us only **chronologically** after we have completed doing all we can do, **but this is demonstrably false**, for we have already received many manifestations of God's grace before we even come to this point. By his grace, we live and breathe. By grace, we are spiritually begotten children of heavenly parents and enjoy divine prospects. By grace, a plan was prepared and a savior designated for humanity when Adam and Eve fell. By grace, the good news of this gospel comes to us and informs us of our eternal options. By grace, we have the agency to accept the gospel when we hear it. By the grace that comes through faith in Christ, we start the repentance process; and by grace, we are justified and made part of God's kingdom even while that process is still incomplete. The grace of God has been involved in our spiritual progress from the beginning and will be involved in our progress until the end.

It therefore belittles God's grace to think of it as only a cherry on top added at the last moment as a mere finishing touch to what we have already accomplished on our own without any help from God. Instead the reverse would be a truer proposition: our efforts are the cherry on top added to all that God has already done for us.

Actually, I understand the preposition "after" in "2 Ne. 25:23 Nephi 25:23 to be a preposition of separation rather than a preposition of time. It denotes logical separateness rather than temporal sequence. We are saved by grace **"apart from all we can do,"** or **"all we can do notwithstanding,"** or even **"regardless of all we can do."** Another acceptable paraphrase of the sense of the verse might read, **"We are still saved by grace, after all is said and done."**

In addition, even the phrase "all we can do" is susceptible to a sinister interpretation as meaning every single good deed we could conceivably have ever done. This is nonsense. If grace could operate only in such cases, no one could ever be saved, not even the best among us. It is precisely because we don't always do everything we could have done that we need a savior in the first place, so obviously we can't make doing everything we could have done a condition for receiving grace and being saved! I believe the emphasis in "2 Ne. 25:23 Nephi 25:23 is meant to fall on the word we ("all we can do," as opposed to all he can do). Moreover, "all we can do" here should probably be understood in the sense of "everything we can do," or even "whatever we can do."

**Thus, the correct sense of "2 Nephi 25:23 would be that we are ultimately saved by grace apart from whatever we manage to do. Grace is not merely a decorative touch or a finishing bit of trim to top off our own efforts—it is**

**God's participation in the process of our salvation from its beginning to its end. Though I must be intimately involved in the process of my salvation, in the long run the success of that venture is utterly dependent upon the grace of Christ.** (Believing Christ: The Parable of the Bicycle and Other Good News, 91)

- Moroni 10:32-33

"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ...

then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ"