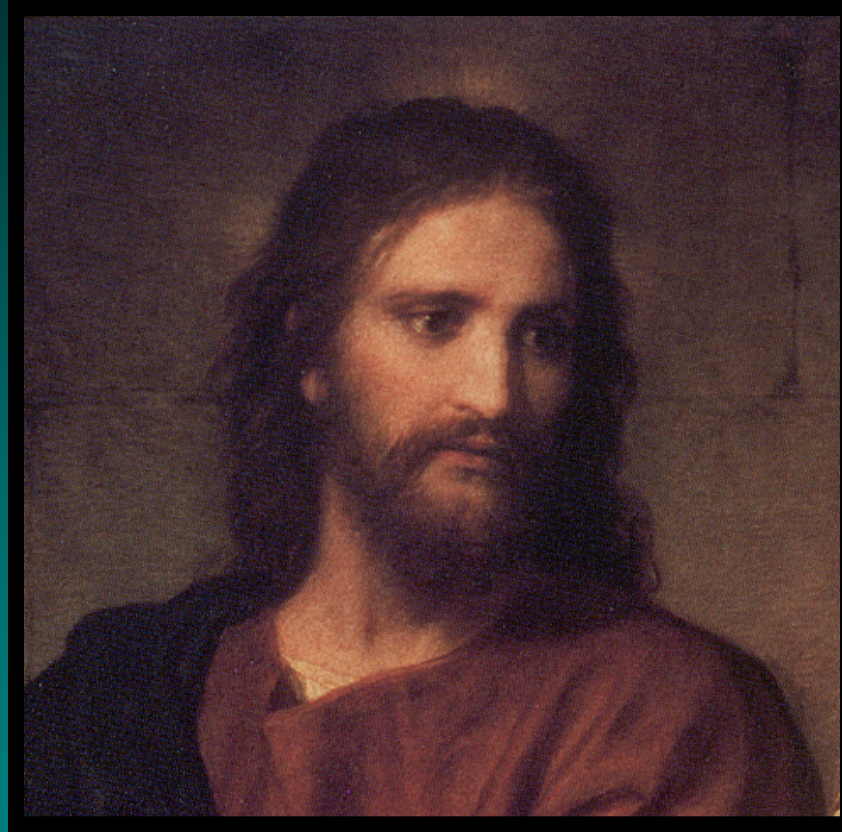


"Be Ye Therefore Perfect"



Understanding and maintaining a balance between the realities of mortal life and our immortal goals

Topics

- Perfection and exaltation
- The trap we can fall into
- Christ's example & atonement, Holy Ghost
 - Acquiring a Christ-like nature
- Ideas and suggestions
 - Maintaining a balance between the realities of mortal life and our immortal goals

We are God's Children

- Romans 8:16-17:
"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ... if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"
- Potential to become like him and receive "all that he hath"

Commandment: Become Like Christ

3 Nephi 12:48 (Matt 5:48):

"I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect"

3 Nephi 27:27:

"what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am"

Ephesians 4:13:

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, ..., unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"

What do we mean by "perfection"?

- Having no flaw or error
- Having all flaws and errors removed
- Greek: complete, finished, fully developed
(Matt 5:48 footnote)

Do we have to be "perfect" to be exalted?

- Yes
 - D&C 1:31
"I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance"
 - Also 1 Ne. 10:21; Alma 7:21; 3 Ne. 27:19;
Moses 6:57

The Trap

- An approach to "Be ye therefore perfect" that is built on a combination of:
 - Miss and/or non understanding of doctrine
 - Mormon Culture
 - Yankee work ethic
 - "Sports" mentality

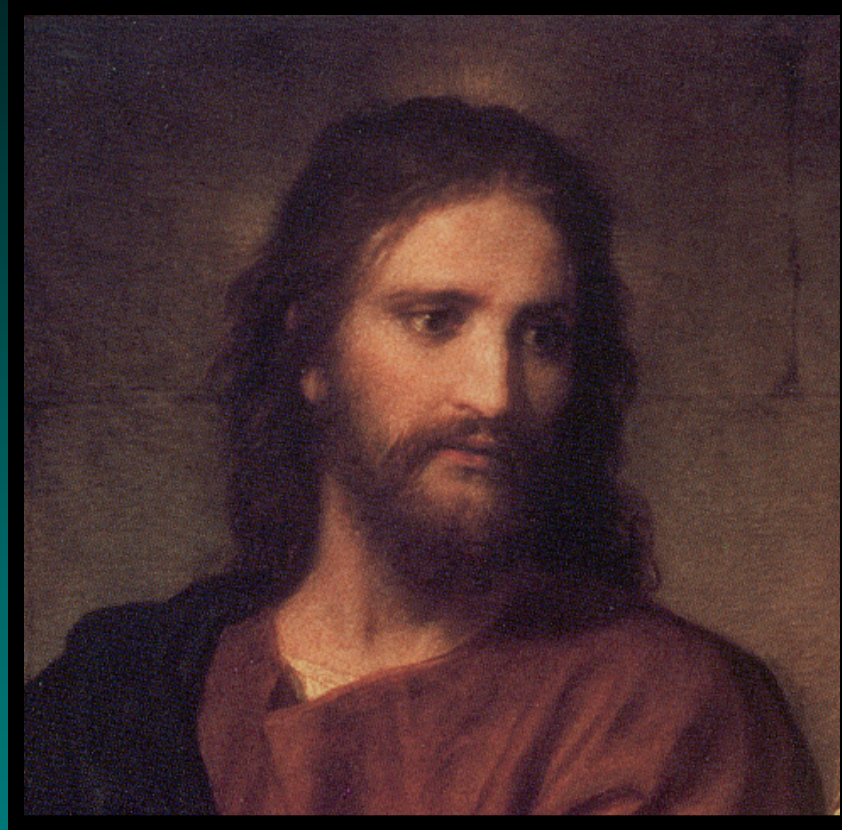
A Characterization

- Straight and narrow path with the iron rod alongside
 - Steep, slippery, slope
 - Mists of darkness all around
- Moving along the path
 - White knuckle grip on the iron rod, pulling along hand over hand
 - Sheer determination and will power
 - Progress measured against others or a checklist
- Role of Christ
 - Celestial cheerleader
 - Atonement for when let go of the iron rod

Am I in the Trap?

- Feelings of inadequacy, hopelessness, depression
- "I can't do it anymore!"
- "You don't need to tell me about my imperfections – I am painfully aware of them"
- Are you going to the Celestial Kingdom? "No! because I'm not perfect"
- Obsession with perfection

"No other way nor name given"



Christ's example and atonement, and the Holy Ghost

Perfection – not in this life

- Joseph Smith

"...you must begin with the first and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 348)

- Joseph Fielding Smith

"...we will have to go even beyond the grave before we reach that perfection and shall be like God" (Doctrines of Salvation 2:18)

What then in this Life?

- Christ's example and atonement
 - 2 Nephi 31:15-21
 - Enter in the gate
 - Endure to end
 - No other way nor name given
- Holy Ghost
 - 2 Nephi 32:1,5
 - Holy Ghost will show all things ye should do

Christ - Grace for Grace



- D&C 93:12-13

"he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness"

- Hebrews 5:8-9

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect..."

- Bruce Hafen (First Quorum of 70)

"His experience suggests that his own developmental process was marked by his being a recipient of the Father's divine grace. His experience also shows that being free from sin is not the same thing as attaining a state of perfection." (The Broken Heart, p. 164)

Us – Grace for Grace



- Our relationship to the Father – can mirror Christ's
 - Difference – we are cleansed by the atonement
 - D&C 93:19-20
- Atoning grace can move us beyond remission of sins to perfection
 - D&C 76:69
"just men made perfect"
 - Moroni 10:32-33
"perfected in him... by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ"
- Bruce Hafen (First Quorum of 70)
"Through the Holy Ghost, the Atonement makes possible certain spiritual endowments that actually purify our nature and enable us to live a more "eternal" or Godlike life." (Beauty for Ashes: The Atonement of Jesus Christ," Ensign, Apr. 1990, pg 7)

A Different Characterization

- Enter the Gate
 - Moroni 8:25
- "Pressing forward" along the path - "becoming"
 - Grace for Grace
 - Moroni 8:26, Moroni 7:48, Moroni 7:3-4, Alma 38:12, Mosiah 3:19, D&C 20:31, Helaman 3:35
- Christ – "the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice"
 - Justified
 - Sanctified
 - Grace
 - Charity, hope, overcoming evil desires, peace & understanding...

How do I "earn" it?



- 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"
 - "it is not that we earn these gifts, but rather that we choose to seek and accept" (D. Todd Christofferson (of the Presidency of the Seventy) Ensign, June 2001, 18)

Ideas & Suggestions - 1

Maintaining a balance between the realities of mortal life and our immortal goals



- Atoning grace & spiritual gifts are available now, not after perfection
- Keep the Atonement at work in our lives
- Feelings of failure or inadequacy are common and natural to most people
- Bad hair days happen

Ideas & Suggestions - 2

Maintaining a balance between the realities of mortal life and our immortal goals



- Avoid unrealistic expectations
- Perfection is not an event – it is a process
- Our progress should be steady and consistent
- Lord looks not only on actions but desires of our hearts

Ideas & Suggestions - 3

Maintaining a balance between the realities of mortal life and our immortal goals



- After we have done all we can, don't stress over things we can not control
- Scriptures show people who stumbled but went on toward perfection
- It is Satan who whispers – "If you are not perfect you are failing"
- Be careful about trying to measure your spirituality by external indicators

