

# Faith – Going beyond the Light

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Topic is Faith – Going beyond the Light

- Talk is not about what faith is
- Talk is about exercising faith

Several ways of exercising faith – going beyond the light.

- First look at the analogy of going beyond the light
  - What is going beyond the light?
  - It does not mean to forsake the light of Christ and walk in the darkness of Satan.
  - It means letting go, trusting the lord to guide us though we can't see the way ahead.
  - Tell story of being in Cave with Boys
    - No light at all
    - Don't want to move
    - Takes courage to move beyond the light

We walk by faith in this life

- We sometimes want to walk by knowledge
- The Lord puts trials and obstacles in front of us which are opportunities to grow in faith or not.
  - We should look at them as invitations to walk beyond the light!
    - Did you ever think of trials that way?
  - Let me illustrate from a life shaping several days in my mission in Sweden
  - Tell story of the worst several days and yet the best several days of my mission
    - Briefcase stolen
    - Flat tire going home
    - Flat tire on the way
    - Taught Leif Gronstedt – baptised 1 week later.
    - We began to look forward to flat tires! "Its going to be a great day Elder!"

Several ways of exercising faith – going beyond the light. For my talk I will categorize them and discuss in the following way:

- Follow the Spirit
- Trusting the Lord / Keeping the commandments

Let me give examples and discuss each of these ways.

## First – Following the Spirit:

Stake Theme: “And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do.” (1 Nephi 4:6)

- Lets begin by reviewing the story of getting the Brass Plates.
  - You and I have read and heard this story many times
  - There are many lessons we can learn from it.
  - I want to focus on the aspect of Nephi following the Spirit and why He would do so.

In chapter 1:

- Nephi had been taught in the learning of his father.
- Nephi had respect for his parents. He calls them goodly parents.

In chapter 2 of 1<sup>st</sup> Nephi:

- Nephi’s father Lehi leads the entire family out of Jerusalem.
- Lehi had been prophesying about the destruction of Jerusalem but the people wouldn’t believe.
- Lehi is commanded to leave Jerusalem with his family in a dream.
- Lehi’s family leaves behind their precious things and go into the wilderness
  - **Note:** In this Lehi is an example to Nephi of walking beyond the light!
  - Don’t you think this had an impression on Nephi – It must have!
  - As parents and leaders we can have an effect.
- Nephi’s brothers, Laman and Lemuel complained about having to leave their precious things behind.
- Lehi taught his family about the visions he had seen.
- We read in 1 Nephi 2:14 that Lehi spoke with power and was filled with the spirit so much so that it caused Laman and Lemuel to shake before him and confounded them that they would not utter against him.
- In verse 16 we get some insight into Nephi himself.
  - He has heard his father preach.
  - He says that he had great desires to know of the mysteries of God. So what does he do?
  - “wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers.” (1Nephi 2:16)
- The Lord spake unto Nephi and blessed him because of his faith.
- We see before the episode of getting the brass plates Nephi has had some dealings with the spirit even though he was still young.

In chapter 3:

- Lehi calls his sons together to tell them that the Lord has commanded that they should go back to Jerusalem and get some records that are engraven on plates of brass.
- As we know when Lehi tells his sons that they should get the plates, Laman and Lemuel's "murmer" at this "hard thing".
- Nephi says that he would go and he would do because the Lord would prepare a way.
- In the **first attempt** Laman failed to get the plates from Laban.
- Nephi's brothers at this point try to leave but Nephi will not leave until he has finished his task.
- In a **second attempt** Nephi and his brothers tried to buy the plates from Laban.
  - This plan also failed and Laban not only took their gold and silver but tried to kill Nephi and his brothers.
- Laman and Lemuel at this point were not only ready to go back to the wilderness but they started to hit Nephi and his brother Sam with a rod.
  - An angel comes and rebukes Laman and Lemuel.
  - **The angel lets Nephi and his brothers know at the end of verse 29 that if they would go up to Jerusalem again, the Lord would deliver Laban into their hands.**

---This is the background that leads up to our scripture theme of the year. Nephi has at this point tried everything that he can think of to accomplish this goal.

- Nephi says in verse 1 Nephi 4:3, *"let us go up; the Lord is able to deliver us."* Nephi's brothers continue to complain but they follow him as far as the walls of Jerusalem. Nephi crept into the city towards the house of Laban and said *"and I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do"*.
- I think we would all agree, he is going beyond the light at this point in his exercise of faith.
  - We know from his later records that the Lord blesses Nephi and his posterity because of his faith.
- Where did the Spirit lead him? - to Laban.
  - The spirit led Nephi in what he should do next, and even though Nephi was hesitant, he stayed in tune with the Spirit's promptings, such that he was able to slay Laban and retrieve the plates.
- It takes a tremendous foundation of faith to say, *'I will go and do'* and then truly carry through
  - For we are never sure what the Lord may require of us.
  - The Lord required of Nephi to slay Laban.
- Not always will stepping beyond the edge of the light require such courage as Nephi had to show.
  - Sometimes little things are just as hard.

- Nephi's story is clear because we are looking at it after the fact.
- Rather than great courage, sometimes it requires listening to the whispering of the still small voice, even when it may not make sense to us at that time.
- Let me share a couple of stories from President Wilford Woodruff's life:

### **SAVING THE FARM**

After one conference, when we had set apart a good many missionaries, I went home quite weary, and I said to myself, I will go and have a rest. Before I got in my house, the spirit told me to take my team and go to my farm. My wife said, "Where are you going?"

"I am going down to the farm."

"What for?"

"I don't know," said I.

I went down to the farm. I found that the river had broken over and had surrounded my house. The water was two feet deep around my house. My hogs were drowning, and my stables were full. By going there I saved my house and surroundings and stopped up the break. These may be considered small things; still they show the working of the spirit.-MS 53:643-644 (1891).

- I love his expression "I don't know"
  - That is to say "I don't know – but the spirit of the Lord has given me direction"

## **MOVING THE CARRIAGE**

After I came to these valleys and returned to Winter Quarters, I was sent to Boston by President Young. He wanted me to take my family there and gather all the Saints of God in New England, in Canada, and in the surrounding regions, and stay there until I gathered them all. I was there about two years. While on the road there, I drove my carriage one evening into the yard of Brother Williams. Brother Orson Hyde drove a wagon by the side of mine. I had my wife and children in the carriage. I had not been there but a few minutes when the spirit said to me, "Get up and move that carriage." I told my wife I had to get up and move the carriage.

She said, "What for?"

I said, "I don't know."

(There is that expression again)

That is all she asked me on such occasions. When I told her I did not know, that was enough. I got up and moved my carriage four or five rods, and put the off fore wheel against the corner of the house. I then looked around me and went to bed. The same spirit said, "Go and move your animals from that oak tree." They were two hundred yards from where my carriage was. I went and moved my horses, and put them in a little hickory grove. I again went to bed.

In thirty minutes a whirlwind came up and broke that oak tree off within two feet from the ground. It swept over three or four fences and fell square in that dooryard, near Brother Orson Hyde's wagon, and right where mine had stood. What would have been the consequences if I had not listened to that spirit? Why, myself and wife and children doubtless would have been killed. That was the still, small voice to me-no earthquake, no thunder, no lightning-but the still, small voice of the Spirit of God. It saved my life. It was the spirit of revelation to me.-MS 53:642-643 (1891).

## **Second – Step beyond the edge of the light by Trusting the Lord / Keeping the commandments**

- I have been reading “The Life of Joseph F Smith”
  - The first part of the book covers the life of his parents – Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith.
  - I am so impressed with Mary Fielding Smith.
    - As I read of her faith and determination through trials I marvel.
      - “I want to have faith like hers”
    - In preparation for this talk I felt prompted to relate somewhat of her life and several experiences to illustrate trusting the Lord / Keeping the commandments.

### **Marries Hyrum Smith:**

Hyrum Smith's first wife, Jerusha Barden, died while he was on a mission in 1837 leaving 6 children. Hyrum married Mary Fielding, then a young English convert, several months later. The Prophet Joseph told his brother Hyrum that it was the will of the Lord that he should marry without delay and take as a wife this young English girl. The reason for this being that Hyrum had a large family of small motherless children. This advice was accepted and Mary Fielding became the wife of Hyrum Smith. This responsibility she accepted and performed with unwavering fidelity up to the day of her death, and much of the time under the most trying circumstances and difficulties that could possibly be imagined, in the midst of mobs, drivings, robberies and even the murder of her loving husband.

### **Leaving Kirtland for Missouri**

When she became the wife of Hyrum Smith, strife, bitterness and hate, were rife in Kirtland, and gaining momentum through the aid of false brethren. She with her husband and little family were forced to leave Kirtland and make their way to Missouri. Hyrum Smith had been robbed along with other members of the Church, and his family was without many of the necessities and comforts of life, when, on the first day of November, 1838, he was taken prisoner and illegally held under sentence of death by a vicious mob court-martial. Twelve days later, Mary Fielding Smith gave birth to a son, Joseph F. Smith.

### **Illustration of burden in those times:**

With her soul racked with fear for the safety of her companion, and her body racked with pain due to the constant suffering under the cloud of oppression and persecution, she had to pass through this ordeal of bringing into the world her first born child. For four months she lingered on the bed of affliction, due to the shock and ill treatment heaped upon her by raging mobs. While in this critical condition her home was searched and such valuables as were left were carried off by those who were persecuting the Saints. She never saw her husband but once after she became a mother before leaving the State of Missouri.

(Joseph Fielding Smith, Life of Joseph F. Smith, p.123-124)

### **After the Martyrdom:**

In 1844 the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum were martyred, leaving Mary Fielding Smith a widow with 8 children. She remained with her family in Nauvoo until the Summer of 1846. When Mary Fielding Smith was ready to leave Nauvoo, she was approached by certain members of the Smith family who, at that time were out of harmony with the Church, endeavored to persuade her not to make the journey, but to remain behind. It was presented to her that if she refused to follow Brigham Young and the Twelve, she would not be harmed, but could remain in peace in Nauvoo. Such was her faith in the Gospel, however, that there could be no peace for her among her enemies and away from the body of the Saints. She knew, for the Lord had made it known to her in no unmistakable terms, the course she should pursue. When she came into the Church she gave her whole soul to the work with a conviction of the truth that was not to waver under difficulty, tribulation and trial.

### **Nauvoo to Winter Quarters:**

She ended up leaving Nauvoo hastily several days before the battle of Nauvoo. She led her family to Winter quarters, where the family stayed for two years, toiling to be prepared to journey to the Salt Lake Valley. At this time besides the children of Hyrum Smith, there were in her household, Mercy Rachel Thompson, widow of Robert B. Thompson, a faithful Elder who died in Nauvoo in 1842; Mary Jane Thompson, daughter of Mercy, and several others. Many of the cattle and horses of the family failed to survive the winter of 1847–48, which left the family crippled in regard to traveling. (Joseph Fielding Smith, Life of Joseph F. Smith, p.147)

### **Leaving Winter Quarters:**

In the Spring of she loaded up her old wagons, seven in number, including a large family carriage, or spring wagon, which, with most if not all of the wagons, was manufactured in Nauvoo out of green timber soaked or boiled in brine. She, fastening two wagons together and yoking up the cows and calves or young steers and what oxen they had, commenced the journey. The advanced companies were at the Elk Horn. On this journey Joseph F. Smith had to yoke and unyoke, as well as drive his oxen. When he reached a hill, he would separate his wagons and take one up at a time; then when at the top he would fasten the two wagons together again and proceed. This was the method of travel with the limited cattle to pull the wagons. They met up with the advance company but Sister Smith didn't have sufficient oxen or cows to continue the Journey.

### **You will be nothing but a burden**

One day, President Heber C. Kimball brought to "Widow Smith's" camp the supervisor of public cattle in the Camp of Israel. From him she tried to obtain sufficient oxen or cows to continue the journey. President Joseph F. Smith, speaking of the incident, says: "After diagnosing our case, considering the number of wagons we had, and the helplessness of the whole company, he very sternly informed the widow that there was no use for her to attempt to cross the plains that year, and advised her to go back to the Missouri River, and remain at Winter Quarters another year, when perhaps she could be helped," then the supervisor added: 'If you start out in this manner, you will be a burden on the company the whole way, and I will have to carry you along or leave you

on the way.' "I am happy to say," said President Smith, the widow had a little mettle in her, and she straightened up and calmly replied: 'Father, I will beat you to the valley and will ask no help from you either.' At this remark the supervisor seemed to be very nettled and replied: 'You can't get there without help, and the burden will be on me.' With this remark he abruptly turned and walked away."

### **Getting oxen so could go:**

President Smith said further ""She had trusted with the most implicit faith in God for deliverance from the jaws of death, for Winter Quarters was a most sickly place at that time, and was being deserted by most of the Saints. After the rebuff she suffered at the hands of one who should have gladly offered her some assistance, she unloaded one wagon, took the best two yoke of oxen they had and she and her brother Joseph started back to the Missouri River. Here she succeeded in borrowing and hiring enough cattle to suffice for the journey."

Sister Smith was assigned to the same company as the brother who had told her she would be nothing but a burden.

### **Healing the Oxen**

There were several incidents of her faith on the trip. President Smith: "we moved smoothly until we reached a point about mid-way between the Platte and Sweetwater, when one of our best oxen laid down in the yoke as if poisoned and all supposed he would die." At this Father\_\_\_\_\_ came up and seeing the cause of the disturbance he blustered about, "as if the world were about at an end. 'There,' said he, 'I told you you would have to be helped and that you would be a burden on the company.' But in this he was mistaken." Producing a bottle of consecrated oil, Widow Smith asked her brother and James Lawson if they would please administer to the ox just as they would do to a sick person, for it was vital to her interest that the ox be restored that she might pursue her journey. Her earnest plea was complied with. These brethren poured oil on the head of the ox and then laid their hands upon it and rebuked the power of the destroyer just as they would have done if the animal had been a human being. Immediately the ox got up and within a very few moments again pulled in the yoke as if nothing had ever happened. This was a great astonishment to the company. Before the company had proceeded very far another of her oxen fell down as the first, but with the same treatment he also got up, and this was repeated the third time; by administration the oxen were fully healed.

### **Setting up in SL valley:**

The Smith family arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in September 1848 (By the way she did beat that unnamed brother to the valley). The journey's end did not bring, however, recess from daily toil. Sister Smith was forced to set about at once to provide a home and shelter for her growing family and the dependents who looked to her for help. Through her faith and resourcefulness she managed to exist through the winter. She located in Mill Creek, south of Salt Lake City, where she, with the help of her boys, expected to engage in farming. She caused a small cabin to be built in which to do the cooking, but she and most of the family slept in the wagons during the winter of 1848.



How they survived through the winter they hardly knew; they were thinly clad and without needed shelter suffered intensely from the cold. Her sad experiences of the past had trained her to be resourceful and with the watchcare of the Lord over them they managed to endure their lot until the springtime came. By careful planning and much hard work, in the course of two years, she had made a comfortable home and she had secured some valuable property.

#### **About her character:**

This was written about her: "Where men were going about seeking charity, and asking for a day's work at the hands of the Church, this indefatigable woman gathered enough to leave her family in comfortable circumstances. She was the soul of thrift and economy, of industry and tireless energy. She worked early and late, and she taught others around her, no matter how small her children might be, the lesson of frugal and constant toil. She was not only thrifty and honest in all her dealings with her fellow-men, but she was equally exacting in her relations with the Lord. She was an honest and generous tithe-payer. Her products and her increase were inexorably tithed to their last iota. Not only did she pay her tithing in kind, but she paid it also out of the first and finest of her fruitage."

#### **Paying tithing:**

President Joseph F. Smith once said

I recollect very vividly a circumstance that occurred in the days of my childhood. My mother was a widow, with a large family to provide for. One spring when we opened our potato pits she had her boys get a load of the best potatoes, and she took them to the tithing office; potatoes were scarce that season. I was a little boy at the time, and drove the team. When we drove up to the steps of the tithing office ready to unload the potatoes, one of the clerks came out and said to my mother: "Widow Smith, it's a shame that you should have to pay tithing." He said a number of other things that I remember well, but they are not necessary for me to repeat here. The first two letters of the name of that tithing clerk was William Thompson, and he chided my mother for paying her tithing, called her anything but wise and prudent; and said there were others able to work that were supported from the tithing office. My mother turned upon him and said: "William, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Would you deny me a blessing? If I did not pay my tithing I should expect the Lord to withhold His blessings from me; I pay my tithing, not only because it is a law of God but because I expect a blessing by doing it. By keeping this and other laws, I expect to prosper and to be able to provide for my family." Though she was a widow, you may turn to the records of the Church from the beginning unto the day of her death, and you will find that she never received a farthing from the Church to help her support herself and her family; but she paid in thousands of dollars in wheat, potatoes, corn, vegetables, meat, etc. The tithes of her sheep and cattle, the tenth pound of her butter, her tenth chicken, the tenth of her eggs, the tenth pig, the tenth calf, the tenth colt—a tenth of everything she raised was paid. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, p.158–160)

#### **Closing:**

Brothers & Sisters.

- I wish to emulate the courage of Nephi, and follow the Spirit, placing myself in the Lord's hands, even though my circumstances aren't nearly as dire.
  - I hope you do to.
- I desire to have the faith of President Woodruff, so when the still small voices whispers to me I can follow and say "I don't know, other than the spirit whispers it to me"
  - I hope you do to.
- I marvel at the faith displayed, in the face of adversity and the steadfastness in keeping the commandments shown by Mary Fielding Smith. I hope that I may have such faith, even though my adversities are small compared to hers.
  - I hope you do to.

I pray that you and I can.

Bear Testimony.