

Refinement & Hope in Christ

By Mike Baird

May 18, 2003

Cooper Mt Ward – Ward conference

Introduction

- Elder Bednar:
 - "We don't become like Nephi overnight"
 - Yet clearly we must
 - 3 Nephi 27:19
"And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end"
 - Feel to share my thoughts regarding this

To enter our Father's Kingdom we must be purified

- One description of this purification is we call the "Refiner's Fire"
 - While we understand at some intellectual level
 - Often we try to "avert our mind" from the implications of the refining process, even as we are going through it!
 - Some of us our hope is "if we put our head under the covers or if we ignore it, it will go away"
 - Others hope to receive an "advance to go and collect 'eternal life' card" Thus skipping landing on the "Boardwalks of life" and paying the high price of rent.
- Important that we realize - Adversity for each of us is part of life as God structured it
- While difficult we need to embrace the refining process
- We can't expect to obtain "all that my Father hath" (D&C 84:34) by merely "putting in our time" at or by "playing hooky" from the Lord's school.
- We must realize the process of becoming like the Savior (purified) is like a recipe made from scratch
 - It is not the equivalent of a frozen meal that is popped in the microwave

Refinement process requires heat

- Remember field trip as a boy to Geneva Steel
 - Molten ore – the heat!
- Refinement process requires heat
- This means the process may be painful
- What we are called upon to endure may be hard
- But it is necessary!

Refinement requires time

- Rocks in Colorado
 - Sharp on the ground
 - Smooth in the stream
 - I threw a couple of sharp rocks in the stream
 - It will take many years to make that sharp rock smooth

So it is for each of us

- Refinement is necessary to burn out the impurities and smooth off the rough edges
- The refinement process is different for each of us
 - You may have to endure
 - Health issues
 - Life's injustice
 - Poverty
 - Wealth
 - Cruelty or insensitivity at the hands of others
 - aloneness
- When enduring such things the process is sometimes hard
- We may feel like
 - world is crashing in on us
 - Things are more than we can bear
 - We are spinning our wheels going nowhere
 - We are drifting along
 - We are caught up in a world of work, eat, sleep, work..... (rats in the maze)
 - **How is it that this process can be turned our good?**
 - **How can we "endure it well"?**

Turn to the Savior

- Many places we could turn and find some temporary respite
- We are taught to reach strength and solace in various ways within the church
- In all that we know & do, however, I testify that Christ is the center of all hope
 - Matt 11:28-30
"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 - Perhaps you have wondered what these versus really mean?
 - Three thoughts:
 - 1) When we are "heavy laden" with sin, when we "come unto [him]" and give up the burden of our sins:
 - No more weighed down – we find "rest unto [our] souls"
 - 2) Mosiah 2:24
" he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you;
 - To take upon us the yoke of Christ we must submit to his will and keep the commandments
"for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you;"
 - The Lord in turn "doth immediately bless [us]" - making that yoke light indeed
 - 3) Alma 31:38 (Alma, Sons of Mosiah, Zeezrom, Amulek, Alma's sons)
"And the Lord provided for them that they should hunger not, neither should they thirst; yea, and he also gave them strength, that they should suffer no manner of afflictions, *save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ.*"
 - The refining heat may come but our pain may be "swallowed up in the joy of Christ" making the burden light that we may endure it well

Christ descended below all – So may lift all

- Christ has not asked us to take a yoke upon us that he has not born
- He has not asked us to bear a burden he has not born
- He has "descended below them all" (D&C 122:8)
- No matter how hot the refining fire, or how turbulent the smoothing process may be if we will but "come unto him" (Matt 11: 28-30) he will bear us up and the things we are called upon to endure will be to us as to the Prophet Joseph Smith:
 - "that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7)

How thankful I am for the Savior

- I make the words of the Hymn my own:
I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me.
I tremble to know that for me he was crucified,
That for me, a sinner, he suffered, he bled and died.
Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me Enough to die for me!
Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!
- I witness that the love and grace proffered us by the Savior is an extension of the Love of our Heavenly Father.
- I want to shout with joy at the plan of Salvation!
- I am overwhelmed when consider that "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son" (John 3:16)
- As I contemplate this, my feelings best expressed by the words of my favorite hymn (How Great Thou Art, #86, 3rd verse)
And when I think of God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die,
I scarce can take it in, that on the cross my burden gladly
bearing he bled and died to take away my sin, then sings my
soul, my Savior God to thee, How great thou art!
- The words that best express it for me. "I scarce can take it in". It overwhelms my feelings, it resonates deep within me, I know that He loves me.
- My witness that he loves each of us
- My invitation, with all the energy of my soul (Alma 5:43), with all the love I bear, is to come unto Christ and cast your burdens at his feet.

