

"Answers to Prayer"
Cooper Mt Sacramento Meeting
Mike Baird – October 22, 2006

Introduction

- My last talk – "Simple ness of the Way"
 - Promised if we would study, pray, church, Temple – our lives would be different
- About 1 year ago I spoke about the Temple
- Today I want to speak about prayer & answers to prayer

Meaningful regular prayer

- We need to have regular, meaningful prayer
- If our prayers are routine or superficial they will not lead to personal growth or provide needed revelation
 - Lauren Maurey's example

Answers to prayers

- Answers to prayers come in different ways
 - Something happens – we recognize "that" was an answer to prayers
 - Scriptures
 - Someone says something
 - Feelings or thoughts
- I would like to focus on answers that we would classify as personal revelation where we have thoughts or feelings that come to us
 - Mostly focus on feelings
 - Boyd K Packer
"I have come to know that inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound." (A Watchman on the Tower , pg 279)
 - President Kimball – Common dress

Being in Tune – 4 questions

- We often speak of being in tune or getting in tune with the Spirit to receive revelation - answer to our prayers
 - What does that mean?
 - How do we get in tune then anyway?
 - How do I know I'm in tune?

- Can anyone be in tune?

What does it mean to be in Tune?

- The communications of the Spirit are hard to describe
 - Boyd K Packer
"We do not have the words (even the scriptures do not have words) which perfectly describe the Spirit. The scriptures usually use the word voice, which does not exactly fit. These delicate, refined spiritual communications are not seen with our eyes nor heard with our ears.... It is a voice that one feels more than one hears...." (A Watchman on the Tower , pg 279)
- Two analogies – tuning forks & radios

Tuning forks

- When something resonates or vibrates at a certain frequency it gives a particular pitch (piano strings, guitar etc)
- Tuning forks resonate at a constant pitch (or frequency)
- Can be used to tune instruments
- When we say we are in tune then with the Spirit you could say that we are operating or vibrating at the same frequency
 - Our Spirit would give off the same "sound"
 - The Spirit in this analogy is like the tuning fork - it resonates at a constant frequency
 - We are like the instrument and need to be tuned to be on the same frequency as the Spirit

Radio – A familiar analogy for tuning

- All of the local radio stations are broadcasting at once
 - The air is full of radio waves
 - What makes it work is the radio stations are broadcasting on different frequencies
 - My radio antennae is actually receiving all of these signals at once
- Inside my radio is a "tuner" which can be tuned to only one frequency at any one time
- To listen to my favorite station I must set the radio such that it is tuned to the frequency my favorite station is broadcasting on
- If I tune to a different frequency I will either get a different station or random noise (static)
 - In this analogy the Spirit is like a favorite station that we must be tuned to, to hear it
 - Otherwise we hear a different voice or static

Sympathetic resonance

- Another feature of tuning forks
- Two tuning forks of the same frequency
- vibration in one can cause the other to vibrate
- Only happens when they are of the same frequency – they are in tune with each other
- I often feel that the best way to describe how the Spirit feels to me is that it resonates with my spirit when I'm in tune
 - When I read the book of Mormon it resonates with something within me and I know it is of God and true

How does it feel to be in tune?

- When I'm in tune – I will feel a resonance that results in these feelings – I can recognize as answers to prayers
 - Harmony
 - Centered
 - Settled (President Dalton)
 - Peace, calm
- What does not in tune feel like:
 - Dissonance
 - Off key
 - Stirred up (what was Satan always doing to the Lamanites)
 - Unsettled
 - Anger, strife

How to be in Tune – follow the right voice

Choir

- to my surprise found it a great part of my Sunday
- Choir & singing talent
 - Pleasant enough voice
 - Can not really read music
 - know middle c and can find it on a piano
 - notes with tails faster
 - Can't sing you a note
 - find it baffling when Lauren tells us to "think" the note
 - Come to understand I do have a talent however
 - understood it was there all along
 - But this past year I've had to refine it and have consciously recognized it

What I hear – I can sing

- play a note – I can "match" it
 - Don't know what note it is
 - but what I sing either feels right or doesn't
- Problem is in a choir its hard for me to distinguish my note on the piano from the others
 - Because to me they all blend together into a harmony that "feels right"
 - My note gets lost in all the rest
 - Since it would look funny to have the entire choir in one spot and me right down with my ear bent over the piano to catch my note I have to figure out another way

Rod Barnes

- Fortunately for me and those singing around me there is Rod Barnes
 - He has musical talents I don't have
 - He can read the music
 - He can sing a note just by looking at it
 - He is trained voice
 - His is a clear voice that I can follow with confidence
 - If I'm within the sound of his voice it just as if the piano is right there and I can hear the note
 - I've trained myself to "match" the tone and key that he sings

Downside to talent

- Following Sister Goldsmith in RS
- In front of me are sopranos to the left of me are basses
 - They are the wrong voices for me to listen to when singing in the choir

Seek out and Listen to the Right Voice

- For me being in tune in the Choir is learning to "Seek out and listen to the right voice"
- In life I find that to be in tune I need to: "Seek out and listen to the right voice"
 - There are different "right voices"
 - The prophet speaks with the right voice
 - President Dalton speaks with the right voice
 - The scriptures speak with the right voice
 - I hear the right voice in the temple
- Just as when I'm singing I can feel that I'm in tune with the right voice we can feel in tune with these "right" voices
 - That is why you can feel such peace and "rightness" in the temple
 - It "feels" right to follow the prophet

How to be in Tune – Putting ourselves in the right frame to receive revelation

- Ways I find that I can not hear the still small voice is if
 - I am not focused right
 - Too many distractions or things going on around me
 - Distractions drown out the Spirit
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Feelings contrary to the Spirit
 - Anger etc.
 - Too much "volume" from other sources
- Sin too

Cannot force answers

- Sometimes we try to force answers
 - Boyd K Packer
"It is not wise to wrestle with the revelations with such insistence as to demand immediate answers or blessings to your liking. You cannot force spiritual things. You can no more force the Spirit to respond than you can force a bean to sprout, or an egg to hatch before it's time. You can create a climate to foster growth, nourish, and protect; but you cannot force or compel" ("The Candle of the Lord", Taken from a talk given at a seminar for new mission presidents.)

Be Still

- I find the answer to both of these problems in what is perhaps my favorite hymn - "Be still my Soul"
 - Turn away the distractions and create a climate for the Spirit
- There are various different ways to "be still". These are my favorites
 - I go for a hike or walk
 - For some weeks I've known the topic of my talk today but not its substance
 - I've waited patiently knowing it would come
 - This past Monday as I went on a walk and turned my mind to the choir it started to flow
 - Read the scriptures
 - Lay on my bed and let my mind wander
 - Go to the Temple
 - Listen to Hymns
 - Isn't always easy
 - Example – 7 times "Be still my soul"
 - Someone communicated to me they were upset about something
 - I wanted to act (reply or do based on the Spirit and in love) and not react (reply or do based on the natural man)
 - Took 7 times "Be still my soul"

Who can be in Tune?

President Gale

- Glad he is here today – taught me the answer to this question
- Like to give him thanks, but owe an apology
- Taught me a lesson for which I'm grateful - that is my thanks
- Unfortunately in getting that lesson I've owed an apology to him
- President Gale is not known for his singing ability
- I've on occasion teased him about his singing ability
- On the other hand President Gale is know for his quick wit
- On all but one of these occasions he has had a quick and witty reply – essentially light banter - things like my acknowledging that yes my commenting on his singing is kind like the kettle calling the pot black and so forth
- On the very last time I ever did and ever will tease him about it he didn't give a witty reply but rather gave me a reply that taught me a lesson.
 - I don't know if he was tired of being teased or what
 - With feeling he said: ***"Just because I can't sing, doesn't mean I don't love music"***
 - Ever had something hit you with such clarity that it sinks to your very soul. Those simple words did for me
- I think partly it sunk so deep because I know exactly what he means
 - I'm sure there are many of you that know exactly what he means
 - I can't play the piano but piano music such as played by Andrew Barnes moves me deeply
 - Certain songs sung by the tabernacle choir move me deeply no matter how many times I listen to it
 - Uplifting songs move me
 - This is not a deep in my intellect but rather I feel it deep in my soul or spirit
 - The music resonates inside
 - It feels right
 - I feel uplifted and at peace at the same time
 - A never ending source of embarrassment to me is when I'm moved by music the tears seem to flow
 - On the other hand bad music "screeches" across my feelings
 - music that is not uplifting doesn't feel the same
 - Its dissonance not harmony

Applied that lesson to the Spirit

- "You don't have to be able to "sing" spiritually to be able to recognize and love the Spirit – to be in tune with the Spirit
 - What do I mean by "sing" spiritually
 - Someone who seems to have the spirit just flowing from them
 - Two examples from our ward that we all know personally President Gale sings spiritually
 - President Dalton sings spiritually
 - When they give a talk we feel the Spirit
 - When they are teaching us – we feel the Spirit
- I'm afraid there are too many of us feel that we need to be able to "sing" spiritually like these men to be able to recognize and feel the Spirit or receive answers to our prayers
 - Perhaps we feel we need to be the bishop, the EQP or the Primary President to be in tune to receive answers to prayers
 - That is simply not true
 - Office or position is not a pre-requisite to receive answers to prayers or to be in tune with the Spirit
 - President Dalton would be the first to tell you that he has no more right to personal revelation or answers to his prayers than anyone here
- "Just because I can't sing, doesn't mean I don't love music"

Did I not speak peace to your mind?

- We feel in tune, we receive answers to our prayers and then:
 - Things don't turn out the way we expected or wanted
 - Things take an unexpected turn of events
 - We often feel like second guessing ourselves
 - Was not in tune then?
 - Maybe I didn't get an answer to my prayers
- My answer is this:
 - Sometimes we may not be but more often than not we really were in tune
 - If it was right then it is still right "then"
 - Do not worry about it
 - Be still and know that He is God
 -
- D&C 6:22-23
"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.
Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?"

Testimony