

The Pleasing Word of God

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Of the Seventy



The pleasing word of God shows us the need for continuous repentance in our lives so we can keep the influence of the Holy Ghost.

Many of us who are meeting to participate in this conference have come “to hear the pleasing word of God, yea, the word which healeth the wounded soul” (Jacob 2:8). That word can be found in the scriptures and in the messages from our leaders, bringing us hope and comfort in the darkness of affliction.

Through our experience in life, we learn that joy in this world is not full, but in Jesus Christ our joy is full (see D&C 101:36). He will give us strength so we will not have to suffer any manner of afflictions save they are swallowed up in His joy (see Alma 31:38).

Our hearts can be filled with anguish when we see a loved one suffer the pains of a horrible disease.

The death of someone we love can leave an empty place in our soul.

When some of our children stray from the gospel path, we may feel guilt and uncertainty about their eternal destiny.

The hope of achieving a celestial marriage and establishing a family in this life can begin to fade as time goes by.

Abuse by those who are supposed to love us can leave deeply painful marks in our soul.

The infidelity of a spouse can destroy a relationship that we hoped would be eternal.

These and many other afflictions inherent to this probationary state sometimes cause us to ask ourselves the same question that the Prophet Joseph Smith asked: “O God, where art thou?” (D&C 121:1).

In those difficult moments in our lives, the pleasing word of God that heals the wounded soul brings the following message of comfort to our heart and mind:

“Peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high” (D&C 121:7–8).

The pleasing word of God fills us with hope, because we know that those who are faithful in tribulation will have the greater reward in the kingdom of heaven and that “after much tribulation come the blessings” (see D&C 58:3–4).

The pleasing word of God, as spoken through the prophets, gives us the security that our eternal sealing, sustained by our faithfulness to the divine promises that we were given for our valiant service in the cause of truth, will bless us and our posterity (see Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 110).

It also gives us the security that, after we have lived a faithful life, we will not lose any blessing for not having done certain things if we were never given the opportunity to do them. If we have lived faithfully until the time of our death, we “will have all the blessings, exaltation, and glory that any man or woman [who has had that opportunity] will have.” (See *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1984], 138.)

Now, it is important to understand that some suffering and affliction can also enter our lives if we fail to truly repent of our sins. President Marion G. Romney taught: “The suffering and distress endured by people of this earth is the result of unrepented and unremitted sin. ... Just as suffering and sorrow attend sin, so happiness and joy attend forgiveness of sins” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1959, 11).

Why does lack of repentance cause suffering and pain?

One of the possible answers is that “a punishment [was] affixed, and a just law given, which brought [about] remorse of conscience” (Alma 42:18; see also verse 16). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that we are the ones who condemn ourselves and that it is the torment of disappointment in our mind that makes it as intense as a burning lake of fire and brimstone (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 224).

If we attempt to appease our conscience by trying to “excuse [ourselves] in the least point because of [our] sins” (Alma 42:30) or by trying to hide them, the only thing we will accomplish is to offend the Spirit (see D&C 121:37) and delay our repentance. This type of relief, besides being temporary, will ultimately bring more pain and grief into our lives and will diminish our possibility of receiving a remission of our sins.

For this type of suffering, the pleasing word of God also brings comfort and hope; it tells us that there is relief from the pain caused by the effects of sin. This relief comes from the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and takes effect if we exercise faith in Him, repent, and are obedient to His commandments.

It is important that we realize that just like the remission of sins, repentance is a process and not something that happens at one particular moment. It requires consistency in each of its steps.

For example, when we partake of the sacrament, we show the Lord that we are going to

remember Him always and keep His commandments. That is an expression of our sincere intent.

The moment we begin to remember Him and keep His commandments every day—and not just on the Sabbath day—is when the remission of our sins begins to gradually take effect and His promise of having His Spirit with us begins to be fulfilled.

Without the proper obedience that must accompany our intent, the effect of remission may disappear before long and the companionship of the Spirit begins to withdraw. We will run the risk of honoring Him with our lips while removing our hearts from Him (see 2 Nephi 27:25).

In addition to comforting us, the pleasing word of God warns us that this process of receiving a remission of our sins can be interrupted when we become entangled “in the vanities of the world,” and it can be resumed through faith if we sincerely repent and humble ourselves (see D&C 20:5–6).

What might be some of those vanities that can interfere in the process of receiving a remission of our sins and that are associated with keeping the Sabbath day holy?

Some examples include arriving late for sacrament meeting without a valid reason; arriving, without previously having examined ourselves, to eat the bread and drink from the cup unworthily (see 1 Corinthians 11:28); and arriving without first having confessed our sins and having asked God for forgiveness for them.

Other examples: being irreverent by exchanging messages on our electronic devices, leaving the meeting after partaking of the sacrament, and engaging in activities in our homes that are inappropriate for that sacred day.

What might be one of the reasons why we, knowing all these things, often fail to keep the Sabbath day holy?

In the book of Isaiah, we can find an answer that, though related to the Sabbath, also applies to other commandments that we must keep: “Turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day” (Isaiah 58:13).

The key words are “turn away ... from doing thy pleasure,” or in other words, doing God’s will. Oftentimes, our will—shaped by the desires, appetites, and passions of the natural man—conflicts with the will of God. The prophet Brigham Young taught that “when the will, passions, and feelings of a person are perfectly submissive to God and his requirements, that person is sanctified.—It is, for my will to be swallowed up in the will of God, that will lead me into all good, and crown me ultimately with immortality and eternal lives” (*Deseret News*, Sept. 7, 1854, 1).

The pleasing word of God invites us to use the power of the Atonement of Christ to apply it to ourselves and become reconciled with His will—and not with the will of the devil and the flesh—so we, through His grace, can be saved (see 2 Nephi 10:24–25).

The pleasing word of God that we share today shows us the need for continuous repentance in our lives so we can keep the influence of the Holy Ghost for as long as possible.

Having the companionship of the Spirit will make us better people. “It will whisper peace and joy to [our] souls, ... it will take malice, hatred, envying, strife, and all evil from [our] hearts; and [our] whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness, and build up the kingdom of God” (see *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 98).

With the influence of the Holy Ghost, we will not be offended, nor will we offend others; we will feel happier, and our minds will be cleaner. Our love for others will increase. We will be more willing to forgive and spread happiness to those around us.

We will feel grateful to see how others progress, and we will seek the good in others.

It is my prayer that we may experience the joy that comes from striving to live in righteousness and that we may keep the companionship of the Holy Ghost in our lives through sincere and continuous repentance. We will become better people, and our families will be blessed. Of these principles I testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.