

Come Follow Me Class Insights – 17 – D&C Sec. 41 - 44 - Class Transcription

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 41 through 44.

So before we jump in today, let me just share a personal experience with you that happened last night. As we've been preparing for and teaching these little episodes each week from the Doctrine and Covenants, and the further we get into it, the more complex the history becomes and the more people come into the story line, and it can get really, really overwhelming at times. So last night my wife went with part of my children to the school play that they were in, and I stayed home with some of the younger – some of our youngest children and took care of them and then began about a two and a half hours session of preparing for today's lesson today, and reading lots of books and lots of stories and fact checking a lot of things. And there came a moment when I felt completely overwhelmed and completely inadequate and this sense of, I'm never going to be good enough when it comes to knowing everything that I should know about these sections and the Church history events at the times when these sections were given, enough to where I'll be able to make sense of them in presenting to other people.

And it was in that moment of feeling terribly inadequate and overwhelmed that the simple, still, small whispering of the Spirit came into my mind with the thought of, 'don't try to "run faster than you have strength."' (Mosiah 4:27) You've got enough.' And the thought came to my mind of some of you in the world with so many things on your plate, so many demands on your time and energy and your efforts and realizing that you have families or you have Church callings or you have responsibilities to teach, and people want to learn, they want to be edified, they want it to be a good experience, and sometimes it's really easy as a parent or as a leader in the Church or as a teacher of the gospel to feel overwhelmed.

So as we jump into today's lesson I just wanted to share that with you that whatever effort you put in, the Lord will magnify it, and it doesn't – you don't have to know everything about every person and you don't have to memorize all the dates and the places and the connections. Sometimes as we go into history, just to become at least a little bit familiar with their setting and their situation, and their life challenges opens doors for the Holy Ghost to reveal to us principles, then from our study and our teaching of the scriptures that become relatable, applicable, relevant to the situations that we're facing in our world today.

So to kind of make things a little bit simple, here's what we're going to do today. I'm going to give out a couple of ideas of key things to look for in these sections. Then I'll share a few stories from some of the people that were alive at the time and they were making this transition to Ohio in January 1831 before these sections are revealed in February of 1831, and then we'll dig into the doctrines that God reveals to his people.

So, let's begin with this. Some of the themes that we have in these sections: we have the theme of gathering, the theme of operations of the Spirit, and we also have the theme of Church administration. These are some of the key ideas that you'll find in these sections. There's lots of other themes we could put on the board. Also, we want you to understand that if you look at the Doctrine and Covenants, many of the sections that we've been reviewing at this point were

delivered to individuals, and we have a marked transition at this point in the Doctrine and Covenants where most of the revelations from here on out are actually delivered to the Church generally. Even though there are still some specific revelations given to specific individuals, for the most part now, revelations are given to the body of the Church.

Why is that? Well, the Church is growing quite a bit. When we started with six members in April of 1830, by January of 1831 there may be three, four, five, six hundred members of the Church, and so God is now giving revelation that is providing guidance and direction to far more people. And it's interesting that we start getting more of these revelations about gathering people together, all these dispersed groups, let's bring them together so we can build a temple. Let's teach people about how the Spirit works so we can have unity and not disorganization. And let's teach people how to administer the Church so that people can better understand the gospel and follow Jesus Christ. So those are just some themes you might want to look for.

So, let's tell a couple of stories of people gathering, joining the Church and gathering with the body of saints. Let's begin with Zebedee Coltrin. January 8, 1831, it's very cold in Ohio; the ice on the water is a foot thick, and a man named Solomon Hancock is in Strongsville, Ohio, is preaching, and Zebedee Coltrin hears from him. In fact, they stay up late at night talking about the gospel, and after Solomon falls asleep around one o'clock in the morning, Zebedee stays up pondering upon the things he's heard, this powerful witness of the gospel, and he determines late that Saturday night, we might call it really early Sunday morning, I'm going to be baptized into God's kingdom.

So, the very next morning, Sunday morning, they cut a hole in the ice, a foot thick, and he gets baptized. So, I grew up in Minnesota, and there's something called the polar bear plunge. There is a lot of sacrifice at times to be a member of the Church, and I just find it incredible that Zebedee was so anxious to join God's kingdom, not even a foot of ice and the cold, biting wind of a January in Ohio could keep him from the warmth of the Spirit that he received by being baptized and being brought into God's kingdom.

Now what's amazing about Zebedee is he is one of the long-time, faithful, early members of the Church. He ended up dying in 1887. He came with the body of saints out to Utah many years later in 1847, and he eventually became a Church patriarch. And one of the great stories of Zebedee Coltrin is two apostles, George Albert Smith and Melvin J. Ballard, when they each were individually thirteen years old, received their patriarchal blessings from Zebedee Coltrin. And he promised each of them, prophesied in their patriarchal blessings that they would become apostles in the Church. And years later when they did, and they got talking about their young lives, they discovered this common connection that both of them had received their patriarchal blessings under the hand of Zebedee Coltrin and had received the promise that they would become apostles. It's a fun story of what's happening as Joseph Smith is transitioning from New York to Ohio, that we have these saints that are gathering, people discovering the gospel like Zebedee Coltrin.

Another story that I really love at this time is that of Mary Rollins. Some of you might know her. She was this young girl who with her sister preserved what had been printed in the Book of Commandments, the early Doctrine and Covenants after a mob had ransacked the printing press. Well, when she was twelve years old, she was living with her widowed mother and her family at

her uncle's house, Sidney Gilbert, and one of the early LDS missionaries, Isaac Morley, had come into town with a copy of the Book of Mormon. Now even though many copies had been printed of the Book of Mormon, Isaac Morley apparently only had one. And Mary Rollins, this twelve-year-old girl, pressed upon Isaac throughout the day like, I want to read this book, and he kept looking at her like, it is my only copy and I have other people I need to teach and other people who should read this.

Finally, he relented and allowed Mary to take the copy with her. So that evening with her family, they took turns reading to each other from the Book of Mormon and stayed up quite late reading. Well, the next day, Isaac comes to retrieve the Book of Mormon, and let me just share with you in her recollection what that exchange was like, and how Isaac, you know, this missionary, didn't really expect a twelve-year-old girl to have been that faithful at reading the only copy of the Book of Mormon that was available for dozens of miles. She said this after she woke up the next morning: "...as soon as it was light enough to see, I was up and learned the first verse in the book. When I reached brother Morley's they had been up for only a little while. When I handed him the book, he remarked, 'I guess you did not read much [of] it.' I showed him how far we had read. He was surprised and said, I don't believe you can tell me one word of it. I then repeated the first verse, also the outlines of the history of Nephi. He gazed at me in surprise and said, 'child, take this book home and finish it, I can wait.'"¹

I love the faith of a twelve-year-old girl. We might remember that Jesus at age twelve was also "[going] about his Father's business" (Luke 2:49). Just – this is what we also see with Mary Rollins, and so wherever we are in our lives, we might take encouragement from the story of Mary Rollins, of this intense and loving desire to read God's word. And luckily, we live in a day when access to the scriptures has been far easier than ever before, and I hope that all of us have the same alacrity and desire to consume the word of God as we saw with Mary Rollins.

We tell these stories to enlighten and inspire us, of these individuals gathering into God's kingdom, but also to remind us that there is sacrifice involved when we choose to follow Jesus and when we tell again the story of Joseph Smith. Here he is in January packing up yet again. How many times have they moved now in their four years of marriage with Emma? Like four, six times?

Quite a few times, and the fact is, remember Emma has already lost one child, their first-born named Alvin, and now she's in her third trimester of pregnancy with twins and she's struggling. It's painful. It's middle of the winter, they've gotten into this sleigh with - so we're coming to the Ohio with Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge who had come to New York to meet Joseph, so we're relocating, we don't have a place to really live. We arrive in Kirtland, Joseph jumps out of the sleigh, goes into Newel K. Whitney's store, goes bounding in, sticks his hand out and says, "Newel K. Whitney, thou art the man!" And he's like, you got the better of me. I don't know what

¹ Rollins, Mary E. "Mary Elizabeth Rollins." *Church History*, history.churchofjesuschrist.org/content/mary-elizabeth-rollins?lang=eng.

your name is, I don't know who you are, and he says, "I'm Joseph Smith, you prayed me here, now what do you want me to do?"²

And thus begins this bond, this friendship where the Whitneys actually moved to their upstairs to allow Joseph and Emma a place to stay. That was kind of their landing spot. Later on they're going to move to the Isaac Morley farm, and from there later on in the year they're going to move to Hiram, Ohio, to stay with John and Elsa Johnson on the Johnson farm.

And so we're bouncing around, but there's incredible sacrifice, and shortly after giving birth to these two twins, neither one of them survive. Another couple in Kirtland had just had twins themselves, the Murdocks, and unfortunately, Sister Murdock passed away, and so Joseph and Emma are able to take those two twins and adopt them and to provide for them and to raise them.

Sometimes these are hard stories to tell, because later a mob attacked the John Johnson home where Joseph Smith was staying and dragged him out, and actually one of the twins is exposed to cold and later dies. And hopefully, none of us have to experience such hardships, but we want you to know that God is with us and he's aware that we all suffer and struggle. It is part of life, and he provides revelations to provide us guidance and encouragement, and I'm just impressed with Joseph Smith. I think about my own life, the things that I feel impressed by God to get done, and if I had to be packing up every couple of months and moving into somebody else's house and, like, not even having a routine where I can get stuff done, and so we just tie this together in stories that sacrifice is involved when we're invited to participate in God's kingdom. And so don't be surprised if life's a little bit difficult. Just know that you can always turn to God, and he will provide the comfort, support, and salvation that you need to make your way through.

Sounds a little bit like the fourth verse of Praise to the Man: "Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven;"³ It just – you see it throughout the scriptures, not just in Church history, but throughout all of the scriptures. But here it's a little closer to us.

And on a personal note, I often have said to God in my moments of sacrifice, like, listen, you could give me a multiple-choice test about sacrifice, and I think I could probably get, get a B or maybe A- range in answering the questions, but do you really need me to actually, like, I don't need a take-home assignment here. So yes, I don't want to have that kind of test. I'd rather have the written test, not the live it kind of a test. And God just says to me, oh, Brother Taylor, that's not quite how it works here.

Yes, it's beautiful. Now, let's open up section 41. You'll notice this is the first of, what is it, 65 sections given in the Kirtland era. This is where the biggest number of Doctrine and Covenants sections are revealed, and this is the very first one, section 41, which comes right before the big one, the law, and we'll get to that in a minute. But as we now transition into the Ohio, you'll notice there are some questions. Where do we live? A guy by the name of Lemman Copley has a very large farm in the Thompson Township near Kirtland, and he has offered to take care of Joseph and

² Various Authors. *Ohio*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, history.churchofjesuschrist.org/exhibit/historic-sites/ohio/kirtland/newel-k-whitney-home-store?lang=eng.

³ Phelps, William W. "Praise to the Man." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/hymns/praise-to-the-man?lang=eng.

Emma and have them come, and so as they ask the Lord, what do you want us to do about this. Section 41 is given. And in this section we get – we get more than what we asked for, which happens all the time for us as we kneel down and plead with heaven for particular blessings. Have you noticed that sometimes God answers your question or answers your prayer, but then he gives you answers to questions you didn't even ask, or he gives you direction you weren't even capable of approaching him to seek his guidance on because you didn't know about it yet. That's kind of what seems to be going on here in section 41.

So first of all, they're told that they need to continue to assemble together and that a house needs to be provided for Joseph and Emma. And then you'll notice in verse 5, actually as he leads into this, he's contrasting between two people, two kinds of people. And even though he doesn't use the exact words here like he does in the Book of Mormon and in the New Testament of the wise and the foolish, whether it be the virgins or the wise man and the foolish man, he's constantly in scriptures showing you the contrast between that which is just really wise to do and that which you should just avoid it at all costs, because it's foolish.

We'll look at the contrast here, verse 5: "He that receiveth my law and doeth it, the same is my disciple; and he that receiveth it and doeth it not, the same is not my disciple, and shall be cast out from among you." It's pretty simple, this is not – this is not rocket science here. You'll notice that in both cases, both groups of people receive the law. Both of them know exactly what God wants them to do. The contrast – so that's the similarity – now the contrast is the wise actually do it. They strive to live it, to become that. The foolish reject it; they don't follow what they've received.

So, he talks about how to become a disciple. This is an interesting word. It actually is from the same word “discipline”. Now many of us want to do important things in our lives or at least do something that matters, and it takes discipline to do things that matter. Or, say, if you go to school, you might study a particular discipline. So, you can either be chaotic in your thinking or your doing, or you can be disciplined and follow standard practice or ideas or rules of thumb or whatever it might be or scientific ideas. So, the idea here is that to be a disciple, you have to be disciplined. You have to be willing to be disciplined, and this goes back to the idea of the sacrifice that's involved in following God. It's not just a free-for-all, and it's not always easy. It sometimes requires, well, actually, it always requires, that we are disciplined, or disciplined, in our efforts. So, as you think about what we hear in these, in this section, you ask yourself, am I willing to discipline myself as God has asked me to do? Am I willing to be careful about my appetites and passions and to discipline myself so that I'm really willing and able to hear God's Spirit speak to me?

So now they're told in verse 7, this is the verse where it refers to “Joseph Smith, Junior, should have a house built, in which to live and translate.” So, it's not just to live, but it's a place that, like Taylor was talking before, a space where I can carve out some time, some energy, some effort to be able to do the things that God has asked him to do. In this case, one of the major jobs that lies in front of him is to complete that translation process of the Bible.

Then you get the additional stuff that comes starting in verse 9: "Again, I have called my servant Edward Partridge; and I give a commandment, that he should be appointed by the voice of the church, and ordained a bishop unto the church, to leave his merchandise and to spend all his time

in the labors of the church." He's been trained as a hatter; he builds, he makes hats. That's his occupation, and he's told, leave that occupation, and now come, and in this early day of the Church, it was going to be a full-time job for him to be our first called and ordained bishop. And since that time, we've had tens of thousands of bishops in the Church, and it's a remarkable office in the priesthood, this calling for him and for everyone since then to be a bishop, to be this shepherd over the flock, to watch over and direct and work with and help the saints move forward.

You'll notice verse 10, the description: "To see to all things as it shall be appointed unto him in my laws in the day that I shall give them." In other words, I'm going to give my law to the prophet, but it's the bishop who's going to see to it that these things are actually carried out at that more local level from our perspective of the Church today.

So, our English word "bishop" originally comes out of the Greek word "episkopos". "Skopos" means to see, like our word spectacle. So "epi" means over and "skopos" is to look at. So, it means an overseer, somebody who watches over. And what a great name. What a great title. What a great word that God would use to describe a position, an office, a priesthood opportunity, to look out for people. You have to kind of be on the high ground or on the tower. Right? We often hear the "watchman on the tower," (D&C 101:54) somebody who has a larger perspective of what's going on and is able to warn and encourage and support. So, this title is a very important one, and section 41 is the first time in the modern-day restoration where we have a bishop. And if you want to find where we first have bishops mentioned in the New Testament, it's Acts chapter 20.

Now I do want to point out even though there's an official priesthood office of being a bishop, any one of us who are overseeing those within our realm of influence, say, a parent overseeing children, we aren't bishops per se officially, but we are playing the role of an overseer. So yes, God has officially called overseers, but all of us should be looking out for one another and assisting the bishop who's assisting Jesus in the work of God.

Okay, section 42, you could just write in your scriptures if you like marking them, the law, because it's been promised that it would come (D&C 38:32) and we've gathered to the Ohio and here the Lord gives it to them. Actually, beginning on February 9th but then two weeks later he's going to give the last part of the section, verses 74 through 93, they're going to come a couple of weeks later in – kind of in follow-up to some questions and to some clarification that was needed regarding the implementation of the law as it was originally laid out.

Now, keep in mind, we call it the law and there's a whole bunch of crossover between what you get in section 42 and what you get at Mount Sinai, where the law, the original law of Moses, was given, and then Jesus gives us the higher law on the Mount of Beatitudes and in the Book of Mormon at the Sermon at the Temple, and you're going to see a lot of crossover between these different givings of the law. It's important to note that when God reveals his law, it's not to say, hey now, totally disregard everything I've said before, it's to--in the words of President Hinckley--it's, 'bring all the good that you have and then watch as I add to it⁴,' as we build on it. And that's

⁴ Hinckley, Gordon B. "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, Aug. 1988, www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1998/08/excerpts-from-recent-addresses-of-president-gordon-b-hinckley?lang=eng.

kind of what's going to be unfolding here in section 42 for this quickly growing body of saints that are going to be continually gathering to the Ohio, they're given the law.

Now it would help to understand what brought this on. In the original version, they had actually written down in the manuscript the questions that these elders had asked, but then the Lord gives the response, and in subsequent versions of the printing of the Book of Commandments and the Doctrine and Covenants, rather, they've crossed out those questions that were given that brought on section 42, because they felt like this is not on the same level, because it's not revelatory; these are just our questions. But it's helpful for us to know what those questions were.

So here you go. The first ten verses, section 42 verse 1 through 10, are an answer to this question: “shall the Church come together into one place or remain as they are in separate bodies⁵?” That was a simple question. Verse 1 through 10 is going to give us the answer. Then the huge chunk, verse 11 through 69 – so 11 to 69 the question that is being answered is: “what is the law regulating the Church in the present situation until the time of her gathering⁶?” And then verse 70 through 73 is going to help the priesthood holders learn their obligations that the Church owes to the families while they're fulfilling their obligations to the Church. In other words, you've got the bishop, Edward Partridge, and his two counselors who are devoting basically all of their time and energy and effort to the building up of the Church, and so those verses refer to what is the Church's responsibility to help them now provide for their families, since they're no longer performing their trades or their normal work.

And then the final set of verses, 74 through 93, once again, they're answering specific questions that the Elders had regarding questions of Church discipline and what do you do when people don't keep certain laws that had been given? How do we – how do we manage that? How do we move forward?⁷

Before we jump into this law, we want to remind everybody that God is a covenant-making and a covenant-keeping God. In fact, it's interesting, we go back to the Law of Moses he gave at Si – that God gave to Moses and the people at Sinai, the word law, the underlying Hebrew word there is torah. Actually it's interesting that the word torah really comes from the Hebrew meaning of instruction. And really, it's actually covenantal instruction and loyalty. So let me just explain this briefly.

Section 42 is the law of God, but it's torah, it's instruction. God is giving us covenantal instructions to show us how to be loyal to him. God has all these things he wants to offer us. He wants to freely give them to us, though we have to show our acceptance of what he wants to freely give by being

⁵ Various Authors. “Revelation, 9 February 1831 [D&C 42:1–72], Page 1.” *Joseph Smith Papers*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 2021, www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-9-february-1831-dc-421-72/1#source-note

⁶ Various Authors. “Revelation, 9 February 1831 [D&C 42:1–72], Page 1.” *Joseph Smith Papers*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 2021, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-9-february-1831-dc-421-72/2>

⁷ Various Authors. “Revelation, 9 February 1831 [D&C 42:1–72], Page 1.” *Joseph Smith Papers*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 2021, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-9-february-1831-dc-421-72/6>

loyal to him, and how do we know how to be loyal? You cannot be loyal unless it's revealed, and that's why you need God's laws so that you have instruction for how to show covenantal love and loyalty back to God.

So as you look at these verses in section 42 you can say to yourself, what has God revealed to me in the latter days that I can do to show that I am loyal to him, that I love him? And what you'll notice, is that much of it is giving instructions for how we love others, for as we love others, we are showing that we love God.

So now, let's watch as God makes very clear his identity. In this case it's Jesus Christ. Look at verse 1: "O ye elders of my church, who have assembled yourselves together in my name, even Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, the Savior of the world; inasmuch as ye believe on my name and keep my commandments." So he sets very clearly the intro, now we're going to answer the question, and he tells them about the need for them to come together, to be strengthened, but then to separate two by two and go out into the world, north, south, east, and west, and preach this gospel, which is a gospel of gathering Israel, to invite this God, the Savior of the world, the son of the living God, to be able to come into their life and have them to come into the fold, into that covenantal fold of God.

Look at verse 9. He tells them that they're going to go out and preach in every region, verse 9: "Until the time shall come when it shall be revealed unto you from on high, when the city of the New Jerusalem shall be prepared, that ye may be gathered in one, that ye may be my people and I will be your God." So here we have the nutshell definition once again of every covenant that we ever make with God, and it's very simply put, him saying to us, I will be your God, and then the other part of the nutshell definition, you will be my people.

And brothers and sisters, this – this covenant connection, this relationship with the God of the universe who knows all things, has all power, he's saying, gather people in one into my fold. That's what missionaries are doing; that's what mommies and daddies are doing; that's what we are doing every time we repent. I love what President Nelson said, “any time we do anything to help anyone on either side of the veil come closer to God, we're helping to gather Israel.”⁸ We're helping God to prevail in the world and in the lives of people all over the world. It's a powerful invitation that he gives us.

Now verse 12. This is - you could call this the law for teachers, or the law of teaching in the kingdom of God in the latter days. Verse 12, 13,14. Notice the wording here: "Again, the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel." So, number one: teach principles of my gospel, not just ethics, not just philosophies of the world, but "teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel." Now, at the time that this was given, we don't have a Book of Commandments; that's not going to come until 1833 and then the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, the first edition, 1835. We don't have that, but if we had, I think the Lord would have included the Bible, the Book of

⁸ Nelson and Sister Wendy W. Nelson, President Russell M. “Hope of Israel.” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 3 June 2018, www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/worldwide-devotional-for-young-adults/2018/06/hope-of-israel?lang=eng

Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and then much later, decades later, the Pearl of Great Price. The canon of scriptures is where we find the principles of the gospel.

Now notice this, verse 13: "And they shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them, and these shall be their teachings, as they shall be directed by the Spirit." Huh. You know, Taylor mentioned this earlier. It's a lot easier to pass a multiple choice or a written test asking questions about principles of the gospel. It's way easier to do that than it is to actually live the gospel in its fullness, going through life. And notice the qualifier in 13: "They shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them." If you want to teach with power, it's not just knowing all the facts and the figures and the dates and the names and the places, it's putting those in a way that they sink from your head into your heart and then out to your hands, where you actually put the gospel into practice. You don't just talk about it. You don't just memorize facts, but you strive to become more like God.

So if we're going to love him with all our heart, might, mind, and strength, you'll notice we dedicate our feelings and our heart to him and our mind – we worship him with our mind, which means we study. Whenever you study the gospel, whenever you open your scriptures, whenever you engage in a study of the words of the living prophets and our Church leaders, that is one way that you're showing God that you love him by loving him with all of your mind; you're thinking, you're pondering, you're studying. But then it's with your might and strength as well that you overcome these natural man and natural woman tendencies of the flesh in a fallen world, and you observe the covenants and Church articles to do them and you do this as directed by the Spirit. I love verse 13.

And then verse 14: "And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach." It's interesting, if you were to change that ye into a vowel, then it becomes very similar to Mount Sinai language. Thou shalt not teach. You teach what you are. Did you catch that? It's not just what we say or write or put up on a screen. Those are techniques, those are elements of teaching. You teach what you are, or who you are. Look at Jesus Christ, the master teacher. Why was he the master teacher? Because he was the master disciple. His words, his miracles, all of his doings and sayings, all of it combined, were simply a reflection of who he was, and there was incredible power in everything he did and everything he said, hence, the master teacher, because he had perfectly observed the covenants and Church articles to do them, and it shows.

Now notice, he then goes down to verse 16: "And as ye shall lift up your voices by the Comforter, ye shall speak and prophesy as seemeth me good." So if you're sitting at home feeling overwhelmed, feeling like you're never going to be good enough, you're never going to have enough knowledge to be able to teach or to train your children or to help your grandchildren or loved ones or serve in a Church calling, brothers and sisters, if you come back to the law of the Lord, he doesn't fill us with the spirit of overwhelm – overwhelmment, he gives us this spirit of peace, that you do the best you can at learning the principles of the gospel from the scriptures and the words of the living prophets, and then do the best you can to observe to do them and to strive to live the gospel, and the Holy Ghost will help you 'speak and prophesy as seemeth him good.' It's very, very comforting for anybody who has to teach or lead in any way.

Then he shifts gears into this long list of the second half of what would be the law of Moses's ten commandments, the ones that are associated with how to treat each other – love your neighbor. You'll notice the first four commandments of the ten are really focused on how we love God, and then the final six are focused on how we love our neighbor as ourselves. Well, verse 18: "Thou shalt not kill"; verse 20: "Thou shalt not steal"; 21: "Thou shalt not lie"; Verse 22: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart and shalt cleave unto her and none else." Do any of you find it interesting that there are only two people in the scriptures that you're commanded to love with all of your heart? It's the Lord and your wife, or your spouse. I think he's helping us understand the importance of that covenantal connection, not just with him, but in this context within a marriage covenant, that we love our spouse with all of our heart and cleave unto her and unto none else. And then he talks about adultery and lusting in 23 and 24 and working our way through this process of repentance as need be.

Then look at verse 30: "Behold, thou wilt remember the poor." So now we're shifting into this – you can't move forward and leave people behind in the gospel, and the poor in this context are the financially poor and destitute. He tells them, "Thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken." So now we're shifting gears in verse 30 and then leading down 31 through 39, 40, we're going to talk about the law of consecration.

So, you have a group of people living at the Isaac Morley farm who have agreed to live a communal life, and this was before the missionaries even showed up, and then they learn the gospel, and many of that group join the Church. And so now they've had some struggles at the Isaac Morley farm with how to implement this communal living. They're trying to do what they're reading about in the Book of Acts or Peter, in the early Christian church are living this united order where they have all things common, and they're struggling at the Morley farm, so here in the law, the Lord lays out some principles of the law of consecration that clarify and make it a little more structured on how this should work in the kingdom. And it's fascinating to watch different phases of Church history in different locations where they try to live this – this united order, all things in common. And there are sometimes when it works really well and other times when, even with this additional information, it doesn't – it doesn't work great. But the principle is very simple. With the bishop as the overseer, he has all of the resources of the Church that everybody pays into, and the bishop then sees what your needs are, and he appoints you what you need for your family, to some less than others and others have greater needs. It's this – it's this amazing principle, the law of consecration, which is rooted on a couple of key elements.

The first key element is this, because if we're not careful, discussions about the law of consecration quickly evolve into discussions of, well then, why don't we try to promote complete takeover of all resources at a central location then to redistribute it, and that gets into all kinds of crazy political discussions that we're not going to touch with a ten-foot pole here. The fact is, agency is completely involved here. It's core to what's going on.

The second theme is an understanding of stewardship versus a principle of ownership, where in some contexts we think everything I've got is mine, and in this context they're saying you have a stewardship. You give everything you own to the building up of the kingdom of God, and then

you're given a stewardship back. That's what you have to be responsible for, and you have to develop this and take care of it and magnify it, multiply it, make it shine, make it beautiful.

So there are going to be some people, you'll notice, who do really, really well with this model. There are going to be some who do okay with it, and then others who struggle and others who completely reject it, and it's going to cause a lot of problem for that group. So, there's this wide range of response to the Lord's law of consecration and to what it means, to actually be a steward and to use my agency to trust God in this kind of a, a, economic setting.

I want to share just a really, really quick personal experience with you that is relevant to this particular issue. Years ago when my wife and I were first married, we were – we were pretty poor. I was finishing my final year of my bachelor's degree at the university up at Utah State, and we had a very, very strict line-item budget. We knew where every dollar was going to be spent, because we didn't have very many of them, so we needed to know where they were all going. And then something happened. Our first baby boy was born, and when Benjamin arrived, that kind of changed our line-item budget a little bit, and after one month, the budget was all in the red in every category, and I could see we were going to be in trouble if we didn't make some adjustments. And so I asked my wife to sit down and let's analyze the budget, and I said, honey, we've got to cut back on some of our spending areas that we can. So my wife sat down next to me and she said, okay, I think we should add five dollars to our fast offering, and I said, honey, we're trying to cut back on the budget, not add to the budget. We've got a spending problem here, not a saving problem. And she said, I understand, and I think we should add five dollars to the fast-offering budget. I said honey, look at the fast-offering budget. We're poor, starving college students with a new child and we're already paying what I think is a generous fast offering; it represents more than what we would pay for missing those meals once a month. This is already a sacrifice for us. And she looked at me and she said, Tyler, I get all of that, but I think the first thing we should do is add five dollars to our fast-offering budget. I was so frustrated. I was praying, Heavenly Father, help her to understand basic principles of mathematics, because she's clearly not getting this.

So I said, tell you what, sweetie, how about if we go through this process of subtracting and cutting back on other areas, and if at the end we can find five additional dollars somewhere else to cut, then we'll put into the fast-offering budget. And she said once again, no, I think we should start by adding five dollars to the fast-offering budget. That didn't sit well with me, and we weren't angry, but boy, I was a bit frustrated. And I said, you know what, let's just figure this out later, and she agreed.

That happened to be the Saturday of a fast Sunday, so the next day was fast Sunday, and I had to fill out a tithing slip with our tithing and fast offering that very day. So she was in the room, not with me, and I pulled out the tithing slip and I filled it out for the old amount, but we didn't have a tithing envelope in our day planner. So the tithing slip and the check were just sitting there. Later in the day, Kiplin came and found those, and she came to me in the kitchen and said, oh Tyler, thank you, that means a lot to me, and I had no idea what she was talking about, and she's hugging me and I'm all confused, and then later I went to the day planner after she had left and I opened it up and I pulled out the tithing slip, and there in my handwriting was written the fast offering amount plus five dollars more than what we normally pay.

I felt like my agency had been violated, I didn't know how this had happened, because I had intentionally tried to write the old amount, but somehow in that process I had written the new amount, and the check was written out for the new amount. And, brothers and sisters, it was in that moment that my prayer to understand basic principles of mathematics for her was answered on my own head where little old Tyler Griffin understood basic principles of mathematics the way the Lord does math.

The principle I learned from my sweet wife was sacrifice just a little bit of what you feel like you don't have and then watch what God does to multiply the remaining portion of what you do have, whether that be with money, whether that be with talent, whether that be with time or energy or resources or expertise. Whatever it is, if we can be more kind and outward-turned with the poor and needy, whether it be in the financial realm or any other realm, watch what the Lord does with the remaining portion. I'll never forget the lesson that day that the Lord taught me with my dear wife.

Now very quickly, let's jump down to verse 40: "Again, thou shalt not be proud in thy heart; let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands." It's this idea of – he is inviting these people, don't try to be pleasing to the world, but try to be pleasing to God. And verse 41: "Let all things be done in cleanliness before him." That verse right there is actually part of the temple recommend interview where the Lord has commanded that all things are to be done in cleanliness before him. It's a beautiful phrase.

And then he speaks in this law of consecration, it doesn't – it doesn't work if you've got a lot of people sitting out here idle, and so he talks about that: "Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer." (D&C 42:42) Everybody has to be contributing to the best of their ability, and there are going to be varying levels of ability and that's totally okay, but you're all contributing.

And then he talks about how to deal with the sick and the afflicted and tells them that the elders should be called to 'lay hands upon them,' (D&C 42:44) "and if they die they shall die unto me, and if they live they shall live unto me." (D&C 42:44) We know that there are many of you who are watching this who have lost loved ones, either recently or in the more distant past, and in many cases these are situations where people with priesthood authority laid hands on their head to bless them, and maybe those blessings didn't always result in healing, and it can be pretty troubling, because we as humans, from our mortal perspective, we want everybody to always be healed and everything to always work out for a long, long, long life of peace and prosperity, and sometimes it doesn't work that way.

Really, really quickly, another personal experience from my mission. I was brand new in Brazil, serving in the Curitiba Brazil mission with Elder Pratt, and we had found this elderly gentleman named Sebastião who had had a pretty rough life, and here towards the end of his life, his late seventies, we teach him the gospel, and he is so excited to receive the gospel and he is looking forward to his baptism date. A few days before he was to be baptized, we find out that he was in the hospital with a terrible case of pneumonia and he's not doing well, and he asked for us to come and give him a blessing. So we go, and Elder Pratt, being the incredible trainer that he was, and

working with me and helping me to develop, he insisted that I be the one to give Sebastião the blessing and he would do the anointing. Keep in mind, I'm still brand new, and I'm struggling with Portuguese and having a hard time. I had no idea what to do.

Elder Pratt finished anointing, and then I laid my hands on Sebastião's head, and he was very clearly in pain and not doing well, having a hard time breathing. And it came very, very distinctly into my mind, the words in Portuguese of, let him go – release him – it's his time. But here I was a brand-new missionary, and I was going to be able to baptize him, and so I didn't bless him to let him go. I blessed him that he would get better. I blessed him that his family would come and join him in the Church, and throughout that blessing the words kept coming to my mind, let him go, let him go, let him go, but I didn't let him go, because that wasn't my will.

At the end, when I finished the lesson, or the blessing, Sebastião turned to me, and he says, really, really, I'm going to get better? I didn't have a lot of confidence when I kind of feebly nodded and said, yeah, I think you're going to be okay. And as we were walking out, Elder Pratt turned to me and he said, Elder Griffin, did you really feel like he's going to get better, and I said no, I had the words to let him go keep coming to my mind, but I didn't want to let him go. He said, that's interesting, because that's what I was feeling the whole time, was that we should have allowed him to move peacefully to the other side of the veil. Sebastião died a few days later, two days later, and that was a lesson that I learned in a painful way, is, when you're – when you're standing there, speaking for the Lord, if the person is appointed to live, then they're going to live with this prayer of faith, this blessing of faith, and if it's their time to go or to die, then it's best to let the Spirit decide that and to follow that direction.

That's one of the things I look forward to in the next life, is meeting Sebastião and going up to him and asking him to forgive me for seeking to do my will rather than the Lord's will. But I know that he was comforted in those final days of his life regardless of the imperfections of a brand-new missionary serving in his area there in Tarumã, Brazil.

Then the rest of this section, for the sake of time, he gives various elements of the law of scriptures and the coming forth of scriptures, the establishment of New Jerusalem, some more clarification on the law of consecration and then some issues with Church discipline before we jump into section 43.

So section 43 is an interesting one, because we have yet again the question in a young Church, where do we receive revelation? There was a woman who came in their midst named Laura Hubble, and she had been professing revelation, and similar to what happened some sections before with Hiram Page and his seer stone, and people thought, well, gosh, I mean, Hiram's a good person, let's follow him as well, and Joseph had received revelation that there is order in how revelation is received. And this section again declares the order of revelation, that God's Church, God's kingdom, is a kingdom of order. So it's a very lovely section, and that again is the context, and in your own life you can ask yourself, what are the sources of truth that I have in my life and am I looking to the right sources for truth?

So like Taylor said, we're not going to cover all the verses, but I just wanted to focus your attention on two verses very quickly. Verse 8: "Now, behold I give unto you a commandment," notice this

isn't just a suggestion or recommendation, this is a commandment, "that when ye are assembled together ye shall instruct and edify each other." You'll notice all of our meetings in the Church and in our families, it's this idea of instruct, teach, and edify, edify coming from the same root as edifice, it's this building up; it's a constructive thing, so you instruct and edify each other. Why? That – or we might say today so that, or in order that "ye may know how to act and direct my church, how to act upon the points of my law and commandments which I have given." Verse 9: "And thus ye shall become instructed in the law of my church, and be sanctified by that which ye have received, and ye shall bind yourselves to act in all holiness before me."

That's the essence of this gospel message to the world, is to come and bind ourselves to God and to make and keep those covenants, even though we have all these tugs and pulls of the world trying to get us to abandon those promises that we have made. Verse 8 and 9 is a really, really good blueprint for us to follow anytime we're going to assemble and have any kind of a meeting. It's beautiful to see his invitation to the whole world, what our missionaries are doing. They're going out and preaching the gospel, and he's promising them saying, you know, we've been preaching the message, but if you don't repent, then the day comes when thunders are going to start preaching this message, and you're going to have the voice of God speaking to you in other ways that maybe aren't quite as pleasant as having some missionaries teach you the gospel, and he invites all the nations of the earth to listen and to come unto him.

Section 44 is an interesting little section. The Church had been meeting every quarter for General Conference; now we do it every six months. And apparently with everything that was going on in early January, with moving everybody from New York to Ohio, apparently the plan for the next conference had not been – the date had not been established, and so God here reveals to Joseph Smith that people should gather – the Church should gather again, a date was established, and he gives instructions about why they should be gathering and what they are supposed to be doing in preparation for that gathering. So as you get ready on a biannual basis to participate in General Conference, you might look at section 44 for some guidance and insight from God about why he wants his people to gather on a regular basis.

We want to say thank you for spending time with us. We love your love for the gospel, and we want you to know that God loves you, and we encourage you to spread light and goodness wherever you go.