

Endowment Lecture 4

Gifts Of The Spirit

Sermon - 1966



by Evangelist Arthur A. Oakman

Endowment Lecture 4 – Gifts Of The Spirit by Evangelist Arthur A. Oakman

A series of six lectures to members of the Melchisedec Priesthood, given at the R.L.D.S. Stone Church, Independence, Missouri from October 3 to 13, 1966.

“And it shall come to pass, that there shall be a great work in the land, even among the Gentiles, for their folly and their abominations shall be made manifest, in the eyes of all people; for I am God, and mine arm is not shortened, and I will show miracles, signs and wonders, unto all those who believe on my name. And whoso shall ask it in my name, in faith, they shall cast out devils; they shall heal the sick; they shall cause the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk; and the time speedily cometh that great things are to be shown forth unto the children of men; but without faith shall not anything be shown forth except desolations upon Babylon, the same which has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And there are none that doeth good except those who are ready to receive the fullness of my gospel, which I have sent forth unto this generation.” (Doctrine & Covenants 34:3a-e)

“Wherefore, beware, lest ye are deceived, and that ye may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given; for verily I say unto you, They are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do, that all may be benefited, that seeketh or that asketh of me, that asketh and

not for a sign that he may consume it upon his lusts. And again, verily I say unto you, I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the church, for all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God: to some it is given one, and to some is given another, [that all may be profited thereby;] to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world; to others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life, if they continue faithful. And again, to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know the differences of administration, as it will be pleasing unto the same Lord, according as the Lord will, suiting his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men. And again, it is given by the Holy Ghost to some to know the diversities of operations, whether it be of God, that the manifestations of the Spirit may be given to every man to profit withal. And again, verily I say unto you, To some it is given, by the Spirit of God, the word of wisdom; to another it is given the word of knowledge, that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge. And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed, and to others it is given to have faith to heal. And again, to some it is given the workings of miracles; and to others it is given to prophesy, and to others the discerning of spirits. And again, it is given to some to speak with tongues, and to another it is given the interpretation of tongues: and all these gifts come from God, for benefit of the children of God. And unto the bishop of the church, and unto such as God shall appoint and ordain to watch over the church, and to be elders unto the church, are to have it given unto them to discern all those gifts, lest there be any

among you professing and yet be not of God. And it shall come to pass that he that asketh in spirit shall receive in spirit; that unto some it may be given to have all those gifts, that there may be a head, in order that every member may be profited thereby: he that asketh in the spirit asketh, according to the will of God, wherefore it is done even as he asketh.” (Doctrine & Covenants 46:4a-8b)

“For the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains, and they be stirred up to anger and perish: For behold at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good; And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say, All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well; And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them, I am no devil, for there is none: And thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance.” (II Nephi 12:23-28)

“Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion. Wo be unto him that crieth, All is well; yea, wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Yea, wo be unto him that saith, We have received, and we need no more. And in fine, wo unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God. For behold, he that is built upon the rock, receiveth it with gladness: and he that is built upon a sandy foundation,

trembleth, lest he shall fall. Wo be unto him that shall say, We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough. For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little: And blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; For unto him that receiveth, I will give more: and from them that shall say, We have enough, shall be taken away even that which they have.”
(II Nephi 12:30-38)

We're to discuss with you tonight, the gifts of the Spirit in relation to the coming of the endowment. We have said so far, that, the last time I was with you, we discussed the church and we tried to make it quite clear, that this was either “a church,” or it was “the church.” If it is simply “a church,” I cannot see any reason for our existence. But if it is “the church,” then it means that we have a unique, distinct position. The Protestant world as a whole as far as its theologians are concerned have no clear cut conception of the church. They have different varying definitions of it, but for us there should be no doubt. The Church of Jesus Christ is the body of Christ; that body of people who are brought together by the gift of his Spirit, and who share in the community of the Spirit by reason of their rebirth.

Being born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances; the ordinances of God's house. And those ordinances are designed in their form and in the manner of their performance specifically to bequeath to men a certain spirit. Thus, when a person comes into the Church of Jesus Christ he acknowledges death to the old way of life that he might rise to a new way of life. And in the waters of baptism seals his

covenant with God. And then he receives through the laying on of hands the gifts of the Spirit, which is the sign and seal of divine acceptance. In the early church there was only just a couple of means by which you could identify a Christian, one is, if you confessed that the Lord Jesus Christ was Lord or that Jesus Christ was Lord, and if you had the Spirit. Both these were just the obverse and reverse side of the same coin of the realm. To confess that Jesus Christ was the Son of God was to manifest the fact that you had received the Spirit, for this knowledge can only come by the operation of the Spirit.

There are some things men can ascertain about the world through the exercise of their own particular gifts and talents. This is known to us as world knowledge; by it many marvelous things have transpired. Men have conquered their environment to a large extent, they have subdued distance, they have wrought new materials, they have conquered time. And many, many marvelous things have come as man has had dominion, as he has answered to God's creativity. You know God is a creator, that's his nature to create. And we are made in his image. And creativity is man's response to God's call. Let me say that again because it's so important; creativity is man's response to God's call. And every time you apprehend a truth or learn the truth, you are realizing yourself in a creative endeavor. You are answering the purpose and the end of your creation. But world knowledge such as we gain from the world that is around us is not itself moral or immoral; it is amoral. It has no value outside the use to which it is put. And in our world, the knowledge of the world, the universe has not been put to Godly ends or purposes as you men well know. And so world knowledge is not God knowledge.

If we would know him, he must reveal himself. We cannot too strongly emphasize that point. The knowledge of God is not the knowledge of the world. You could learn things about God from a study of the operation of the world. He, as James Jeans says, must be a great thinker and a great mathematician. From a study of nature you cannot discern whether he is moral or immoral, and from a study of history of course it is impossible to discern that God is a righteous God. Or as you examine man and try to analyze him, you get some glimpse of the divine image, although that has been cast over and sickly'd o'er with a pale cast of thought of recent years since Freud, and Adler, and Jung, and McDougal and some others have been to work on our spiritual insides as a race, and have told us what dwells deep down within the unconscious part of us. World knowledge is not God knowledge and if we are to know him, he must reveal himself to us. And so the first manifestation that he gives to man, in point of time, and in order of importance is this, "I Am the Lord thy God." That is the first basic revelation. That is the first basic approach of man to God; God to man.

And as the New and Old Testaments bears abundant witness, he has been in a constant search for man. It is said that the Old and the New Testaments manifests man's search for God, but that isn't true; the reverse is true. It manifests God's search for men. And when men gather together a system, which they deduce from an observation of history, a system which they can deduce from observing the life of the Lord Jesus at a distance in point of time and space, and collect and gather this into a system and then proceed to worship the system, they are in idolatry. And the knowledge that men have of the world cannot prompt communion with God, it is impossible. For if we are to be known, it is only upon his terms. Only God can tell us

what he will do; only God can tell us who he is. And thus when Moses approached the burning bush, the first announcement was,

“...put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” (Exodus 3:5)

And then the Heavenly Father proceeded to identify himself to Moses and thus this was the beginning of the deliverance of the people of God from the bondage of Israel. Therefore, we say with emphasis that the only knowledge of God there is comes from him. He reveals himself. And the knowledge upon which the church is built is not man made, but divinely imparted. The first basic gift of the Spirit is the gift to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and was crucified for the sins of the world. This is what constitutes an apostle. This is what makes a man an apostle. And maybe brethren you will pardon me if I bear a personal testimony in this particular regard. Not that I might be exalted, but that you might be inspired perhaps to seek for yourself, some of those aspects of the divine beauty and the divine glory which are available to all.

Years ago when I knew so much more than I do now, when I was a young elder, Berkeley California. How old was I? Twenty-seven, Twenty-eight? I had been in the missionary field some few years. I was still single, which was a matter of concern to a lot of ladies who had marriageable daughters. And I had been serving as Pastor at Berkeley, California for some time. I had served in other parts of the country too, as a missionary, and I began to be concerned about myself. I began to be concerned; I wanted to know, one, whether my ministry was acceptable or not. I didn't want it from man, I wanted it

from above. I felt like Joseph [Joseph Smith, Jr.] felt; that if I could acquire this wisdom then I would be satisfied. Another thing I wanted to know: you go to work for someone, you want to know what you're prospects are, don't you? And I wanted to know where I would be and what I would be doing fifteen or twenty years from then; what kind of a future there was in this Church for me. And so, at the same time there were in the congregation four young men. These young men had been married to good Latter Day Saint girls, and were; and were not members of the church. And this was in the back of my mind too. I wanted to be sure that somehow or the other we could reach them and baptize them.

And so I began to make it a matter of prayer. I entered into this discipline; at five o'clock every morning, not for one, or two or three, but for weeks. Not for one, or two or three, but for many months. And every morning of my life at that time I went down to the church. I locked the front door, then went to my study and locked the study door. And then I climbed up into the attic through the roof where the organ loft was and locked that door, so that nobody would see me or know that I was there. And there I began to ask in fervent prayer, whether my ministry was acceptable to the Lord, what my future would be, and so forth. And this I did for some time and then gradually it dawned on me that I ought to be praying for these four young men. And so I began to tack on to the end of my prayer you see, I began to tack on to the end of it concern for these four young men. And this I continued to do. I thought to myself, I could perhaps find out how I was doing from the men of the church but that didn't satisfy me. I wasn't working for them. I wasn't working for the President of the Church nor the Quorum of Twelve; I was

working for the Lord Jesus, and I wanted to know from him what my position was.

And I began in this discipline and pretty soon, more and more and more of my prayer time, which lasted about an hour, more and more of my prayer time began to be taken up with these four young men. And do you know something began to happen to me; I began to see some things in the lives of these men I had never discerned before. And found great liberty in my prayers in praying for them. And I'm sure that my prayers found reflection in my life because my attitude toward these men changed.

One of them told me, "it's no use you coming to see me Arthur, because if anybody ever baptizes me it won't be you; it'll be John Rushton."

I was tired of hearing the name of John Rushton. I followed him in St. Louis and I followed him in Berkeley, California. He was my nemesis. You remember I told you a story about John the other day? Everywhere I'd go to pay a pastoral visit, they'd tell me what a wonderful pastor John Rushton was, and how they'd never see another one like him. I never said anything to Henry Strand who is now an Elder I think in Creston, Iowa; I just let it pass. But I continued my prayers.

I told him, "Well I don't care who baptizes you, as long as you're baptized."

And so this went on until the time came that I found myself joyfully hurrying to the place of my vigil with the sole concern on my mind and heart for these four men. I had forgotten completely why I had started this spiritual discipline. Nothing was further from my mind. It had gone from me.

And this particular day, August the sixth, 1933, it was a Sunday, a Sacrament Sunday, I went as usual and I read the fifth chapter of Saint Matthew's Gospel. You know it,

“And Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain; and when he was set down, his disciples came unto him; And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,”
(Mathew 5:1-2)

And then what happened next I can only describe to you in language that I know. The lines of that scripture parted and I stepped through and I was there. I was there, I know I was there, and God knows I was there. I cannot describe the scene to you. I did discern, as I looked upon the faces of the disciples, and I shall know them again when I see them; I did discern them there. I saw the Master sitting on a boulder. I didn't see his face although the assurance was given to me that if I continued to live righteously and faithfully the day would come when I would see his face. I saw the joy with which nature was bearing the imprint of her creator. And it seemed to me that the very blades of grass upon that hillside sang the song of redeeming love and the rapt look in the faces of those men and women I shall never forget as long as I live. It was something that cannot be described in ordinary terms, it must be experienced to be understood. I know what the next lines were in the scripture, it says,

“...blessed are the poor in spirit, who come unto me; for {of such} [theirs] is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mathew 5:5)
[corrected wording] / {added wording}

But instead of the words that were in the New Testament, these are the words I heard:

“Arthur, your ministry has been acceptable unto me. Many have rejoiced under the sound of my precepts. You have been waiting for me to call your name, and verily I say unto you the lines of your calling are already laid and your ministry shall be in part to your own people across the sea whom you love; and a prophet and a seer thou shalt be unto them. Remember my servant, the Twelve are they who desired to take upon them my name with full purpose of heart.”

And then and there I knew what my calling was, to be an Apostle. Then he said,

“Do not permit the moments of discouragement to interfere with your work.”

The vision closed. When I had forgotten completely about myself and was totally immersed in my concern for these other men, I had the answer to my prayer. I rather suspect that there you have the illustration of a principle. I don't know. You will be glad to know that I baptized those four men before I left there. But something arose in my mind after the vision had passed, and I can still see it. It's so vivid in my mind and my heart; it has been a, sort of a guide to me all my days. And I can say that I have seen the Lord Jesus. Not alone in that one vision; please, don't think this. I have seen him in so many ways and his character has been indelibly impressed on the life of the Church, and I thank God that my eyes have been opened at

times to discern him moving among his people and among his servants.

And so after the vision had passed, and I came to myself more or less, I began to wonder. What is this? Is it imagination? What do I have really? Could not a clever psychiatrist tell me that this arose from my subconscious? If I told him this vision, couldn't he not analyze it and take every element of it and say that it was already in my subconscious? And I began wondering about it.

And a little later that morning we had a sacrament service. Presiding over that sacrament service was Elder Guy P. Levitt. Some of you may remember brother Levitt; a most remarkable man. He didn't have a logical bone in his body, but I never knew a man that could come into a social situation and put his finger on the spiritual sense of that social situation as clearly, as cleanly, and as rightly, as Guy Levitt could. That morning we had a sacrament service, one which I shall never forget. And these four young men were present. And during the course of the service as you know at times, and you brethren have experienced, the good Spirit came and kindled our hearts and gradually built up, until the time came when two angels came into the room. One represented the Melchisedec Priesthood and the other represented the Aaronic Priesthood; and wrote over the heads of these four young men, who had not yet been ordained, the offices in the priesthood which they should occupy. And while this was going on brother Levitt stood under the gift and the inspiration of the power of God and spoke to one after the other of these men, and then he turned to me and he said.

“Thus saith the Spirit unto you my son, Arthur. Your ministry has been acceptable unto me. And many have rejoiced

under the sound of my precepts. You have been waiting for me to call your name, and I say unto you the lines of your calling are already laid, and your ministry shall be to your own people across the sea whom you love. Your ministry shall be in part to your own people across the sea whom you love. And a prophet and a seer shall thou be unto them.”

Then he left out the part having to do with my calling. Then he said,

“Do not permit the moments of discouragement to interfere with thy work.”

Now brethren, some things you believe and some things you know. I knew as a result of that experience that I had been in contact with the eternal Spirit, which holds in one comprehensive grasp the whole of time and has the power to recreate the past, and make it speak to men creatively in the present. That experience marked my ministry indelibly. Gentlemen, why should we be in doubt when with God there is light and peace, and with us there is prayer. We have within ourselves the agencies and the powers, sown into our very natures by the God of Heaven, by which the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ can be given to each one of us.

I was an Elder, born in the northern end of the slums of London. But poor as we were my folks found the gospel. And here I was on the other side of the world; blessed. I’ve often wondered about that experience, looked upon it, and thanked God for I still live in the hope that someday I shall see the face of my Lord and I hope that upon me as upon you, he shall smile;

because when the Lord Jesus smiles upon a man, he's made clean, every wit.

And so it is given to some to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and was crucified for the sins of the world; this is the apostolic gift. Without this gift there's no authentic knowledge of God. Oh, I wish you men could know the welter of indecision and unrest that there is in the modern world with respect to theology and philosophy. Sincere, humble, saintly men have sought to find the meaning of existence and it has eluded them. The earnest expectation of the creature they represent, and they wait for the manifestation of the sons of God. I can imagine someday in the millennium, where there shall be some beautiful garden into which shall be gathered the spirits of all the philosophers. And then perhaps by some great blessing of God, his ministers shall go and instruct them and bless them. And that which they have longed for shall be given to them.

To others, to some it is given to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and was crucified for the sins of the world. Let me say again something that I said a moment ago. Without this gift there's no authentic knowledge of God, as he is in himself. All knowledge which searches for him misses the mark. Let me illustrate it to you this way. Many men look across the centuries to the life and ministry of Jesus; they study deeply the background of his life and his philosophy. With earnestness they search through centuries of writing and unquestionably they bring back insights into his life which have blessed mankind. They reflect the light, and the spirit, and the love of God, which was manifested in the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ. Again I say they reflect this light. But Gentlemen, there's a difference between sunlight and moonlight. There's a difference

between the reflected light of the Son of God and the authentic knowledge dwelling within yourself of the testimony of Jesus, so that you know God.

I was faced with a problem some years ago; I trust you will pardon these personal references. Began, came here to Independence in 1936 to serve as pastor of the Stone Church, as green as a gourd. I remember sitting, I was going up the aisle in the Auditorium one day and Sister Charles Kohler was the Women's Leader; looked me up and down. They were giving up John Sheehy. Looked me up and down.

She said to me, "Well, we'll get acquainted with you."

And, came here in '36 and I started preaching on the Campus. Oh, if ever God took two loaves and ...seven loaves or five loaves and two fishes, he took them that summer. Finally, I went to Brother Elbert Smith.

I said, "Brother Elbert, I have a problem."

He said, "What is it?"

Well I said, "I'm bothered about the, I'm bothered about the principle of divine revelation."

He said, "You are?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "What's your problem?"

I said, "I seem to see it as a parting of the curtain, when you see things you hadn't seen before. You look upon history with a new eye and a new discernment and you see God working in the events of history, and your mind is inspired to see him working, and out of that relationship between the divinely guided event and the divinely inspired mind, you speak."

But I said, "That's not enough. A young fellow came to me the other day, his home was breaking up."

I said, “I couldn’t help him, he said he was distraught. No view of history was going to help him. What can I do?”

“Well Arthur,” he says, “you face the same problem that every man that grows faces.”

He said, “I can illustrate it best to you this way. I’ve been in the Presidency now,” he said, “some” ...how much was it... “Thirty years or so.”

He says, “I know Fred M. [President Frederick M. Smith] inside, out. I know how he feels about problems, I know how he thinks, I know his address, I know his moods, I know his philosophy; I know him inside out. “So,” he says, “When he’s in California and I’m in Maine and a problem comes up I don’t have to telephone him to ask him what to do; I know what he would do. I’ve lived with him, I’ve worked with him.” He says, “I know how he thinks and when these problems come to me,” he says, “I know instinctively what the President of the Church would say, or feel or do about this.”

And he said, “That’s the problem you face.” He says, “You need to be even more the man of God than you are now, and you need to live with the Lord Jesus until you come to know how he thinks and how he feels. Then,” he says, “When you do this you won’t have any problem going out and ministering to these people that have broken hearts and contrite spirits.” He says, “You will know how the Master feels about them, and what he would say to them, what he would do for them; the counsel, and advice he would give to them.”

And I have found that what Brother Elbert says is true. It’s a principle; a principle that we need in the Eldership of the Church to apprehend and to appreciate. The closer you live to the Lord Jesus the more like him you become. You come to know how he feels, how he thinks, and what he would do. And

this is the only way in which he has of stretching forth his hand to minister to the sons of men; of raising his voice to preach the warning voice to the sons of men in this wicked, woebegone generation. He has no voice but your voice, no hands but your hands. And I'm convinced tonight that the Lord Jesus Christ is as it were bound in the lives of the ministry of his servants waiting to be released, so that he can come forth and stand up in his manhood in the midst of each one of us, and minister to the sons and the daughters of men. And this is not an achievement of the intellect; it's an achievement of faith. Without faith shall not anything be shown forth among the children of men. Why is it Brethren? Are we satisfied to come every two years to a Conference and have the President of the Church say take this sinner out of the Quorum of Twelve and put this sinner in his place? For that's all an Apostle is; he's a sinner, that has come to know something of the love of God. Is that our idea of revelation? God pity us if that is so!

This Church ought to be vibrant with a testimony of the Lord Jesus, so that out of every life and every lip and from every hand there streams the healing touch and the living words of the Lord Jesus Christ. That day will come sometime when the endowment comes to us. That day will come. And the day will come when the humblest testimony from the weakest saint will be endowed by the Spirit of God. And the words thus spoken shall be life and light to those to whom they are spoken; shall be the mind and the will of God; shall be scripture to them; shall be the means of salvation to them. We have nothing to fear except our lack of faith.

To some it is given to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he was crucified for the sins of the world, and to others it is given to believe on their testimony, that they too

might have eternal life if they continue faithful. The Spirit which prompts the testimony opens the ears. The same Spirit which causes a man to witness causes the people who hear to believe, for belief is a gift of God. No man can believe in Jesus Christ just because he wants to, his belief is liberated in him by the operation of the divine Spirit to every man. Have you discovered your gift? Pardon me for preaching to you, I am supposed to be lecturing. And you know when you're lecturing you're supposed to have a calm even voice. But how can a man lecture on a subject like this, to a group of men like you?

I'm not interested in the intellectual approach to this thing. I'd like to take the coal from off the altar and put it into your hearts and on to your lips; that's what I'd like to be able to do. The same spirit which causes an apostle to bear witness, and as I said the other night, God pity this Church if all the apostles that there were, were in the quorum of twelve, we'd be a sorry lot. Any man that has the testimony of Jesus Christ that Jesus is the Christ; crucified for the sins of the world is an apostle. The knowledge given to him by God qualifies him to be one sent to bear record of that which he knows and most assuredly believes. This self-same witness causes men to be so. Every man has a gift of the spirit. To some it is given one and to some it is given another and it is your business to find out what your gift is. If it is only to believe, then if you have a gift and you know you have a gift even if it is only the gift to believe you must know that a gift that is unused atrophies.

Years ago I used to be able to sing; thirty years ago. I sang the "Elijah" for General Conference, I sang the "Messiah;" but all I can do now is croak. I've been yelling too much in the pulpit. I can't say that I've lost the gift of music and song, but it's certainly in pawn. And if ever I was disposed to get it out of

pawn, I would have to work very, very, very hard. I'd have to begin by breathing deep before I opened my mouth, because my diaphragm's all gone. I haven't sung for years. You can imagine what happens to a man's belief if he doesn't use it, can't you? It atrophies! A certain very good friend of mine has become discouraged with the progress of the Church. He has been hurt. Now he finds communion with God on the lake on a Sunday. I guess that's better than nothing; or maybe it's worse than nothing, perhaps?

Be not faithless but be believing. The Lord told Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery early, be not faithless but be believing. Cast aside your doubts and your fears. And gentlemen, the power and the ability to do this depends on discipline. Discipline! To eschew that which you know is opposed to and inimical to the growth and development of your gift. To not indulge yourself when you know. Look who's talking. But I speak to myself as well as to you.

Listen gentlemen, God has put into your hearts by the power of his Spirit, as you know as well as I do that there are things you're doing that you ought not to do, and the things you're not doing you know you ought to do. Thank God for the revelation that leads men to repentance. It shows that you're still living and he has not forsaken you. And you ought not to resent the chastenings from within, that come to you by the power of the Spirit. You do the things he prompts you in your heart to do, even if you can't rationalize them at the moment and you'll discover that that Spirit will grow in you and you will find yourself growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

Gentlemen, you can only know the truth that you do; truth doesn't come by thinking nor philosophizing, truth comes by doing. If any man shall do, he shall know.

“...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

Free from what? Free from the necessity of learning all over again, free to do the thing you ought to do. There’s nothing more pitiful in the whole of creation, and I’m sure that the angels must weep every time it occurs as it does so frequently, that a man comes to the Rubicon in his life, to the place where there's no turning back, and at this particular juncture the realization dawns on him, that some things he ought to have done and ought to do he now no longer has the power to do; and that the choices he has made in the past prohibits him now from doing the things he ought to do. That’s a burden that must be borne by those who have to bear it. Gentlemen, it’s a pitiful burden because as far as we’re concerned it’s one that need never be borne, if only we’ll do the things he puts into our hearts to do by the power of his Spirit.

So the gifts of the gospel then, are mandatory. We need more exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. I’m not talking about, when we talk about the gifts of the Spirit, we talk about somebody standing up and saying “thus saith the Lord;” that’s all very well in its place. There ought to be more of our good, intelligent, enlightened Latter Day Saints doing it, than there are. I’m sure there are gifts of prophesy that have not yet been brought forth and discovered, which for one reason or another are buried in the tomb of our sinful humanity. But basically, these two gifts are the axis upon which the whole spiritual world revolves. The world knows nothing about them; nothing. They are the instruments through which God ministers to his church.

Outside of these gifts there is no ministry. There may be instruction, and there may be new ideas, there may even be progress, but no real ministry.

For it is by the word of God men are ministered to and by the word of God, men are inspired to minister to other people. So gentlemen whatever you do, don't sell yourselves short. For you know above and beyond this world in which we live there is a spiritual universe which is above and beyond us; and which somehow by the grace of God and the new birth a portion of it dwells within us. So we're creatures both of this world and the world to come. And there dwells in each one of us the spirit of this world and the Spirit of the Kingdom of God and these two war one with another. Paul calls it flesh and the spirit. We all know what he means; not the actual physical carcass of a man because that's not the origin of sin. He's talking about the life that is lived after the lusts of the flesh. And constantly we have to make the choice between one and the other.

And this means, if it means anything at all, it means fasting; fasting and prayer. I rather think that many people in our church have lost the power to fast. Most of us have gotten into a rut, and you know what a rut is, don't you? Yes, you're right; it's a grave with both ends knocked out. Most of us have gotten into a habitual form of life. "Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark," as Robert Browning says; "Finished and finite clods." (from a poem titled "*Rabbi Ben Ezra*") But we're not this. Our presence here indicated that we are not this, and that there are better things yet for us. But brethren, if they are to be achieved we must discipline ourselves. This discipline is the creative act which God asks of us. This discipline is that which he would have of us, and he will give us the power to do it. And

you know what fasting is, don't you? Not going without something.

My good friend and I here, Brother Fred Davies and I were in Graceland College together. He was a little huskier built than I was, and so they chose him, consequently, to play on the football team. I wasn't; I was free to stand on the sidelines and cheer. But he was free to go in the lineup and play. But every day he came for his lunch, the coach said to him, "No desert." It had its price didn't it, playing on the football team? And it's just the same way playing on God's team; it has its price, gentlemen. And for too long, too many of us have been on the sidelines, when we are called to play on the team.

I don't need to tell you what fasting is, it's the organization of your life about some central principle. It's dedication, it's rejoicing, it's prayer. And then, let me ask you a question. What does it matter what we eat and what we drink so long as we're strong and healthy and fit and able, to answer God's call to us? What does it matter what we have, just so long as we have sufficient to live? Plus a little extra so that we can make a sacrifice to the cause of Christ. What does it matter what we wear so long as we are neat and clean in appearance? What does it matter whether we live or whether we die, if by living or dying we can glorify God and extend His kingdom?

Spiritual gifts; I could enumerate them but you can read Section 46, twelfth chapter of the First Book of Corinthians and other relevant scriptures in the Book of Mormon. You know what they are. And remember the admonition which was given in the scripture;

“...I would that ye should always [remember, and] retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the Church...” (Doctrine & Covenants 46:5a)

and the purpose for which they are given,

“...verily I say unto you, They are given for the benefit of those who love me and {who} keep [all] my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do...” (Doctrine & Covenants 46:4b)

Into our hands the good oriel has been committed, a dispensation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Have you ever thought, how many are you from the angel, who ordained you and who ordained him and who ordained him, and who ordained him? Have you ever considered the origin of your priesthood, which is a gift of God to you? Brethren, I'm sure you have, and I'm sure that at times you have been perplexed as to the way in which you could best discharge your responsibility. I trust that some things we have said here during these lectures may give you a clue as to how you might best qualify. How the gifts of God to you might be used, and how above all you might find that satisfaction and peace which comes from an exercise of these gifts. And the enrichment of personality which follows and the building of community which is a natural result of the exercise of these gifts among the people of God.

*Transcribed by Morris Heide, and published by
LatterDayTruth.org, 2013.*

*For other Church materials, please visit our website at
www.LatterDayTruth.org*