

2018 Restoration Branch Family Reunion & Conference of Restoration Elders

This year's overall theme is, **Zion the Beautiful** (1 Nephi 3:187-189 and Genesis 7:21-25).

Zion the Beautiful beckons us on. Are we prepared to do what is needed to go onward to Zion? Are we committed to march on with a song? This year the reunion and conference will focus on our vision of *Zion the Beautiful* and learning of ways to seek to establish it. Below are the daily themes with some associated scriptures.

Sunday **Zion the Beautiful Beckons Us On**

Scriptures: Psalm 50:2 & 5; D&C 97:4a,c&d

Monday **Onward to Zion—Seek to Bring Forth & Establish My Zion**

Scriptures: D&C 12:2a-3b; DC 6:3a; D&C 10:3a; D&C 11:3b; D&C 38:4

Tuesday: **Onward to Zion—Bind Yourselves with A Covenant**

Scriptures: D&C 38:4; D&C 81:4c-5b; D&C 83:8; D&C 102:1-2; D&C 106:1a-2c; 4 Nephi 1:3-4; 4 Nephi 1:17-19

Wednesday: **Onward to Zion—Prepare Yourselves and Your Families**

Scriptures: D&C 64:7-8b; D&C 68:4a-g D&C 138:3a-e; D&C 140:5a-d

Thursday: **Onward to Zion—Prepare Ye the Center Place**

Scriptures: D&C 57:1; D&C 45:13; D&C 94; D&C 108:2a-4c; D&C 136:3; D&C 98:9a-11d

Friday: **Onward to Zion—March on With a Song**

Scriptures: Genesis 9:22; 2 Nephi 5:90-92; D&C 45:14; D&C 98:4f-g; D&C 100:3b-f

The following thoughts are shared for your consideration as you reflect upon the 2018 themes.

We know that the redemption of Zion is assured because it is God's work. *Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered, they that remain and are pure in heart shall return and come to their inheritances; they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy; to build up the waste places of Zion. And all these things, that the prophets might be fulfilled (D&C 98:4g).* This scripture assures us that Zion will not be moved out of its place. What is not assured is our place in it. Our ability to inhabit Zion is directly related to our status as citizens in God's Kingdom. The inhabitants of Zion are *the pure in heart*, those who are of one heart and one mind—the heart and mind of Christ.

Zionic conditions, is about the obedience of a people—their obedience to the *Celestial Law*. There is a time appointed when God will fulfill all things. We must make preparation for that day and time. *The work of preparation and the perfection of my Saints go forward slowly, and Zionic conditions are no further away nor any closer than the spiritual condition of my people justifies (D&C 140:5c).* So what keeps us from seeking to establish these conditions?

ONE, when we lose sight of our common covenant, when we lose sight of the sacrifice Christ made for each of us, it attacks our ability to focus on working together towards the Kingdom and the vision that Zion will be. When we are contentious and disputing with one another it is impossible to work towards the vision. Zion is not an individual condition. It begins with the individual, but finds expression in the condition of a people. It is the condition of a faithful people—a people of one heart and one mind based on their individual love and commitment to the Lord. When we focus on our common covenant, when we focus on the example of Christ, we will, as a people move towards the vision.

TWO, if we lose sight of God's promises—if we focus on worldly conditions—we will despair and lose sight of the vision that Zion will be. The evidence the world presents us, leads us to conclude the battle is being lost. Voices from the world clamor that the vision is unattainable, not real, or not even desirable. It causes us to doubt, and fear, that Zion cannot be. We cannot listen to these voices. We should not allow their message to find place in our hearts.

So, how do we actively engage in seeking to establish the cause of Zion? Broadly, we know it involves keeping all of God's commandments, (loving God and one another), and embracing the truth. But where and how do we become actively engaged?

One way to begin is to evaluate everything we do. Everything we do is either moving us towards the vision or moving us away from it. Each moment of our lives we are either in the will of God, fulfilling the measure of our creation, or we are out of His will, not fulfilling it. The keeping of the celestial law has to do with us fulfilling the measure of our creation. As a people, as those representing His restored church in these latter days, the fulfillment of that calling is the requirement of being a people of one heart and one mind, seeking to fulfill His commandments in our lives with one another. To this end we must evaluate our lives. To this end we must dedicate our lives.

Another way to begin is to commit our lives to one another in very specific and tangible ways. This will require us to come together. Zion will not and cannot be brought about in a vacuum. It will be brought about within the context of Christ's Church. We must *become the body of Christ*. We must prepare the way of the Lord. It starts by committing ourselves to meet one another's needs. We are admonished in several places that we are to be equal in temporal things if we are to be equal in spiritual things. This equality is not referring to a simple redistribution of wealth. There is a different plan. This equality is not based on the principal of justice but rather on perfect love. It proposes a way for each of us to be able to fulfill the measure of our creation. This covenant and equality is described in Section 81 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

What has Christ called us to do? Has he called us to move mountains? Change the course of rivers? To go and convert the entire world? No, He has simply called us to express our love for him by loving one another. He has simply called us to love one another enough to sacrifice *self* for each other. He has called us as a people to come together and organize ourselves in such a way that our temporal and spiritual needs will be met. He has called us to seek after the welfare of each other. He calls us to covenant with each other that no one will go hungry; no one will go without clothing; that all will have a place to live; that all will have a means to make a living; that all will have opportunity to contribute to the cause; that all will come to a knowledge of his

laws; and that no one will bear any burden alone. This does not require a special endowment—it simply requires our obedience and faithfulness to his calling in our lives—it requires living the celestial law.

He has called us to do these things not for our sake alone, but for the sake of those in the world who care to see and hear. For when we as a people are of one heart and one mind—**Zion will be**—and it will be an ensign for those who to see. Within this body of people lies the potential fulfillment of the Kingdom; the possibility of being the *posterity* that sees the fulfillment of the promises of the ages. God has covenanted with us that we will inherit a land of promise *if we seek it with all our hearts* (D&C 38:4). A collective *seeking* not just an individual one. Let us trust in God's promises and keep our eyes on Zion the Beautiful, and then we will be endowed with the power of the Holy Ghost to accomplish all things. *Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; And if they endure unto the end, they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; And whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.*" *I Nephi 3:187-189*