

THE PURPOSE AND NATURE OF PRIESTHOOD—AN INTRODUCTION

A. Priesthood - Why instituted? Why needed?

Lesson learning objectives: To understand...

- the need and establishment for God's plan of redemption
- the eternal nature of God's priesthood
- the essential function of authorized representatives, priesthood, in relation to God's plan of redemption

1. God's Mission - to bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man

✎ **Doctrine and Covenants 22:23b** And there is no end to my works, neither to my words; for this is my work and my glory, **to bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man.**

2. Reason for the Mission—A Plan of Redemption

✎ Once Adam and Eve, because of their disobedience, fell out of the **eternal presence of God and saw him not**—God, because of His love for his creation, set in place a means to redeem His creation so that they might once again **come into his eternal presence.**

Genesis 4:5 And he **gave unto them commandments**, that they should **1) worship the Lord** their God; and should **2) offer the firstlings of their flocks** for an offering unto the Lord. [**1st Ordinance**]

4:7-8...This thing is a **similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten** of the Father, Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest, in the name of the Son. And **thou shalt repent, and call upon God, in the name of the Son for evermore.** [**1st ordinance is an ordinance of Sacrifice**]

4:9 And in that day, the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying, I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever; that, **as thou hast fallen, thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.**

4:10 And in that day Adam blessed God, and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth; saying, Blessed be the

name of God, for, because of my transgression my eyes are opened, **and in this life I shall have joy, and again, in the flesh I shall see God.** [**Repentance, Obedience, Redemption**]

✎ Repentance and Baptism Enjoined as part of the Plan of Redemption

Genesis 6:49 And [Enoch] said unto them, **Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death, and we are made partakers of misery and woe.** **6:50** Behold, **Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him; and men have become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God.** **6:51** But God hath made known unto our fathers, **that all men must repent.** **6:52** And he called upon our father Adam, by his own voice, saying, I am God; I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh. **6:53** And he also said unto him, If thou wilt, **turn unto me and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask it shall be given you.** **6:54** And our father Adam spake unto the Lord, and said, **Why is it that men must repent, and be baptized in water?**

3. Agency, an Instrumental Part of God's Plan of Redemption—Answer to Adam's Question, Why?

✎ **They are agents unto themselves—all men, everywhere, must repent,**

Genesis 6:55-56 And the Lord said unto Adam, Behold, **I have forgiven thee thy transgression** in the garden of Eden. Hence came the saying abroad among the people, **that the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt**, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children, for they are whole from the foundation of the world. **6:57-58** And the Lord spake unto Adam, saying, Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin, even so, when they begin to grow up sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good. And it is given unto them to know good from evil; wherefore, **they are agents unto themselves.** **6:59-60** And I have given unto you another law and commandment; wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God. For no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence... **6:61-63** Therefore I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children, saying, that by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death; and **inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water and blood, and the spirit, which I have made**, and so become of dust a living soul; Even so **ye must be born again, into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood**, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; **that ye may be sanctified (separated) from all sin**; and **enjoy the words of eternal life in this world**, and **eternal life in the world to come**; even immortal glory. For, **by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified; and by the blood ye are sanctified.**

✎ **Agency/Choice** - God, the Father, considered that the Agency of man was paramount in his plan to save His creation.

Genesis 3:2 “And he [Satan] came before me, saying, Behold I, send me, I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore, give me thine honor. But behold, my beloved

Son, which was my beloved and chosen from the beginning, said unto me: Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Wherefore, because that **Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man**, which I, the Lord God, had given him; and also that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten I caused that he should be cast down; and he became Satan.”

✎ **A firm decree, *To Choose*, declared from the mouth of God to all**

Genesis 4:13 And Satan came among them, saying, I am also a son of God, and he commanded them, saying, Believe it not. And they believed it not; and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual and devilish.

5:1-2 And the Lord God called upon men, by the Holy Ghost, everywhere, and commanded them that they should repent; And as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins, should be saved. And as many as believed not, and repented not, should be damned. **And the words went forth out of the mouth of God, in a firm decree, wherefore they must be fulfilled.**

4. **As part of God’s plan, a probation period was provided where man might freely exercise his agency and choose – God’s way or Satan’s way**

✎ **I Corinthians 10:21** Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

✎ The plan could not be accomplished unless man was taught repentance and redemption through faith on the name of Christ. He did that with Adam through the ministry of Angels.

D&C 28:12a-12c “But, behold, I say unto you, that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, **the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of mine only begotten Son**; and thus

did I, the Lord God, **appoint unto man the days of his probation**; that by his natural death, he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe, and they that believed not, unto eternal damnation.”

✎ There would be virtually no hope of our fellow probationers being saved through God’s plan in this evil, carnal, and sensual world without teachers with a method of teaching those of us who are probationers, and without those teachers being authorized and empowered with divine power. **Thus, the need for authorized and empowered representatives of God to declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of Jesus.** Christ, at the direction of God the Father through the Holy Ghost, proceeded to do that very thing.

✎ **Gospel preached from the beginning by holy angels, by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost**

Genesis 5:42-44 And thus the works of darkness began to prevail among all the sons of men...And God cursed the earth with a sore curse, and was angry with the wicked, with all the sons of men whom he had made, for they would not hearken unto his voice, nor believe on his Only Begotten Son...And **thus the gospel began to be preached from the beginning,** a) **being declared by holy angels, sent forth** from the presence of God; and b) **by his own voice,** and c) **by the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

5. The Priesthood, Plan of Salvation & Ordinances Established from the Beginning

✎ ***Priesthood is Eternal* - Now this same priesthood which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also...**

Genesis 6:4-7 And God revealed himself unto Seth, and he rebelled not, but offered an acceptable sacrifice like unto his brother Abel. And to him also was born a son, and he called his name Enos. And **then began these men to call upon the name of the Lord; and the Lord blessed them;** and a book of remembrance was

kept in the which was recorded in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God, to write by the Spirit of inspiration; **(Holy Scriptures)** And by them their children were taught to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled. **Now this same priesthood which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also...**

Genesis 6:30-31 [God speaking through Enoch] **And an hell I have prepared for them, if they repent not; And this is a decree which I have sent forth in the beginning of the world,** from mine own mouth, from the foundation thereof; **and by the mouths of my servants, thy fathers, have I decreed it;** even as it shall be sent forth in the world, unto the end thereof.

✎ **They were preachers of righteousness who called men to repent and taught faith and the plan of salvation freely unto all**

Genesis 6:10-24 And this is the genealogy of the sons of Adam, **who was the son of God, with whom God himself conversed.** And they were **preachers of righteousness, and spake and prophesied, and called upon all men everywhere to repent.** And **faith was taught** unto the children of men.

Genesis 6:61-63 Therefore **I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children,** saying, that by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death; and **inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water and blood, and the spirit, which I have made,** and so become of dust a living soul; Even so **ye must be born again, into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood,** even the blood of mine Only Begotten; **that ye may be sanctified (separated) from all sin; and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come;** even immortal glory. For, **by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified; and by the blood ye are sanctified.**

✧ **Priesthood, instituted in the days of Adam by a holy ordinance, was confirmed to be handed down from father to son, and continueth in the church of God in all generations**

Genesis 5:45 And thus **all things were confirmed unto Adam by an holy ordinance**; and the gospel preached; and a decree sent forth that it should be in the world until the end thereof; and thus it was.

Priesthood is Lineal – Originally handed down from father to son – Subsequently, lineal in the sense of being able to trace priesthood authority back to someone who was authorized by Christ.

D&C 104:18-19 The order of **this priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son**, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promises were made. This order was instituted in the days of Adam, and came down by lineage in the following manner: 19a From Adam to Seth, who was ordained by Adam at the age of sixty-nine years, and was blessed by him three years previous to his (Adam's) death, and received the promise of God by his father, that his posterity should be the chosen of the Lord, 19b and that they should be preserved unto the end of the earth, because he (Seth) was a perfect man, and his likeness was the express likeness of his father, insomuch that he seemed to be like unto his father in all things; and could be distinguished from him only by his age. (Additional information: D&C 104:20-29)

D&C 83:2c-3a The holy priesthood, which he [Moses] received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro;...[which came down from Adam] **which priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations, and is without beginning of days or end of years.** And the Lord confirmed a priesthood also upon Aaron and his seed throughout all their generations, which priesthood also continueth and abideth forever, with the priesthood which is after the holiest order of God.

Hebrews 7:2-3 For this Melchizedek was ordained a priest after the order of the Son of God, which order was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. And all those who are ordained unto this priesthood are made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually.

✧ Because **God loves us and desires us to be with him, he has provided the means and the way for us to return into His presence, to see his face once again**

Genesis 6:64-66 Therefore **it is given to abide in you, the record of heaven, the Comforter**, the peaceable things of immortal glory, the truth of all things, that which quickeneth all things which maketh alive all things, that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice and judgment. And now, behold, I say unto you, **This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten**, who shall come in the meridian of time. And, behold, **all things have their likeness; and all things are created and made to bear record of me; both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual;** things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath, **all things bear record of me.**

✧ **Ordinance of Baptism by Water and Fire, and Ordination of Priesthood Instituted on the Earth**

Genesis 6:67-71 And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and **he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water; and thus he was baptized.**

And the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying, **Thou art baptized**

with fire and with the Holy Ghost; this is the record of the Father and the Son, from henceforth and forever;

And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen.

6. SO, Why Priesthood? - To Preach and Teach the Plan of Salvation & the Doctrine of Christ

 **The question at hand: “Why Priesthood”?** We can see that apparently a form of Priesthood has always been, and apparently always will be because God the Father willed it so, and Christ, through the Holy Ghost made it so, so that all of God’s creation will have the opportunity to choose God and His plan of redemption. Without Priesthood, there would be no hope for God’s creation on the Earth where Satan rules. Truly, how could any learn of the Power of the Spirit unless there is an approved preacher.

 ***I am called;...to preach unto all, ... yea, to cry unto them that they must repent and be born again***

Alma 3:83-91 And I say unto you, that I know that Jesus Christ shall come; ... And behold, it is he that cometh to take away the sins of the world; yea, the sins of every man who steadfastly believeth on his name. And now I say unto you, that this is the order after-which **I am called; yea, to preach unto my beloved brethren: yea. and every one that dwelleth in the land: Yea, to preach unto all, ... yea, to cry unto them that they must repent and be born again;** Yea, thus saith the Spirit, Repent all ye ends of the earth, for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand; yea, the Son of God cometh in his glory, in his might, majesty, power and dominion ... And also the Spirit saith unto me, yea, crieth unto me with a mighty voice, saying, Go forth and say unto this people, Repent, for except ye repent, ye can in no wise inherit the kingdom of heaven ... Behold, and remember, the Holy One hath spoken it.

 ***This was the ministry unto which ye were called, to declare these glad tidings unto this people.***

Alma 19:21-23 And now, my son, I would say somewhat unto you concerning the coming of Christ. Behold, I say unto you, that it is he that surely shall come, to take away the sins of the world; yea, he cometh to declare glad tidings of salvation unto his people. And now my son, this was the ministry unto which ye were called, to declare these glad tidings unto this people, to prepare their minds; or rather that salvation might come unto them, that they may prepare the minds of their children to hear the word at the time of his coming.

 ***The Lord God ordained priests... to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest,***

Alma 9:63-64, 65 And I would that ye should remember that **the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things [Plan of Salvation] unto the people;** And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption. **And thus being called by his holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest,**

 ***Therefore go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth.***

3 Nephi 5:40-43 And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; and whoso buildeth upon this, buildeth upon my rock; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not

built upon my rock, but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell standeth open to receive such, when the floods come, and the winds beat upon them. **Therefore go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth.**

✍ **D&C 3:16a-b** Behold, this is my doctrine: **Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church; whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore, he is not of my church.**

B. Priesthood – What is it? Its purpose? How is it obtained?

Lesson learning objectives: To understand...

- that priesthood sets men apart to become one with Christ in His work
- the basic meaning and purpose of priesthood
- that priesthood belongs to God and can only function when authorized by Him
- that priesthood authority as instituted by God involves three parties, *God, man, and God's people*
- that priesthood is independent and exist with or without an occupant
- that priesthood ordination is not an ancillary, but an essential aspect of conferring authority
- the urgency of the hour and the need for authorized and qualified priesthood

1. What is Priesthood?

✍ **Priesthood sets men apart to become one with Christ in His work. It can be defined as:**

"Priesthood is 1) the power of God operating in men, 2) chosen of him, 3) **ordained and set apart according to the provisions of his law**, 4) for the ministering of His gospel of salvation to mankind, in word and in ordinance. This priesthood or power carries with it authority to act in Christ's stead. by faith in him, in any and all matters which are expedient according to his will."—*The Nature of Priesthood*, Charles Fry - pg.5

"Priesthood is the 1) power of divine life 2) planted in the souls of willing and responsive men. 3) chosen of God 4) to minister that life to mankind for their spiritual quickening, to prepare them for a fullness of everlasting life in the kingdom of God"—*The Nature of Priesthood*, Charles Fry - pg. 32

✍ **Priesthood is an Oath and A Covenant from God He Cannot Break – Only We Can**

D&C 83:6f-i Therefore, all that my Father hath shall be given unto him; and this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood. Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood receive this oath and

covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved; but whoso breaketh this covenant, after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come.

✍ **The Meaning of Priesthood**

- 1) Priesthood is authority from God, an endowment of a portion of spiritual power to persuade men to choose godlike ways and purposes.
- 2) Priesthood is power from God, entrusted to those men whom he specifically calls and chooses, validated with authority to act for him on the earth.
- 3) Priesthood is the power of life emanating from Christ.
- 4) Priesthood is a commission from God that "continueth and abideth forever"
- 5) Priesthood is a sacred trust, and those accepting it must account' for the manner in which it is used.
- 6) Priesthood is a continuing flow of light and power,
- 7) Priesthood is the channel through which flow the blessings of God to man,
- 8) Priesthood is a divine principle,

- 9) Priesthood implements the love of God, which reaches out for the salvation of mankind. **Ministry of the Teacher – I. What is Priesthood? B. The Meaning of Priesthood, pg. 9-12**

 **Jesus defined and personalized priesthood this way:**

John 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 **Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.** 16 **Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit; and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.** 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

2. What is the purpose of God's priesthood?

 **Joseph Smith III - "The powers of priesthood ... Are confirmed for no other purpose than the salvation of man, and are continued only in the just exercise of them in the pursuit of this object; hence any act of any man called to this calling, performed with any other intent, or attended with a different result is not authorized of God, and hence does not bind the powers of heaven." — Joseph Smith, III, *The Saints' Herald*, vol. 24, pg.168.**

 **"Priesthood on earth is the authority and order of God committed unto men. by which they are duly empowered and commissioned to preach the gospel and administer the ordinances thereof; namely, to baptize, lay on hands, bless, administer the Lord's supper, ordain, and perform any and all other duties required in the administration of the government of His church, or kingdom, among men." *Presidency and Priesthood*, William H. Kelley**

 **Without authorized priesthood to administer the ordinances, the power and knowledge of God is not manifest unto men in the flesh**

D&C 83:3c Therefore, in the ordinances thereof the power of godliness is manifest; and without

the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this, no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.

3. Priesthood Belongs to God—All Christian Ministry Must Be Authorized if it is to Be Effective.

 **Christ was called and set apart to the Holy Priesthood after the Order of The Son of God**

Hebrews 5:4-6 And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to-be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.

Note: Christ did not take upon himself the calling of High Priest - God bestowed it upon him because he humbled himself - God declared first Christ's place in the Kingdom - "You Are My Son, today I have begotten thee"- the NIV interprets it to say - "Today I have become your Father"-this doesn't make sense because God was his Father always.

As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

 **God Ordains and Confers Authority—Not Man**

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power in the church but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.

John 3:28 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

Mosiah 11:118...none received authority...except it were by him (Alma) from God.

“DELEGATED AUTHORITY. The right understanding of this question is this; priesthood is delegated authority from God, and is given for a specific purpose, and while men are in the exercise of it within the province of this purpose they are agents for him who has

bestowed it; and whenever they transcend the province of that authority they cease to act for God. Nor is it that which is inherent in the man by which everything that he does is qualifiedly of the Lord; and it is only when and so long as men speak with the direct recognition of him who has sent them and within the province of the delegated authority, that they speak as agents for God.” **Supplement to The Saints' Herald. Lamoni, Iowa, July 22, 1893. Address to the Priesthood, President Joseph Smith.**

“The primary value of ordination is that it makes clear that the authority of the minister is not his own. This authority comes to him from above. After he has been set apart, then in a very special sense he is no more his own man.”
F. Henry Edwards, *Authority and Spiritual Power*, pg. 23

 **Man called according to God’s timing**

Matthew 3:24,26 And it came to pass that Jesus grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of his ministry to come. And after many years, the hour of his ministry drew nigh.

Doctrine & Covenants 10:8a, 10a Behold, I command you, that you need not suppose that you are called to preach until you are called: Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments; yea, with all your might, mind, and strength; seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed;

 **God has chosen that the process of conferring priesthood authority be shared and involve 3 parties.**

1) Authority to act comes from God to man through His true and living church. It is conferred by the power of the holy ghost through one who has authority to ordain.

Jacob 1:17 Wherefore, I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having firstly obtained mine errand from the Lord

D&C 42:4 Again I say unto you that it shall not be given to anyone to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority, and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church.

Mosiah 11:18. . . . none received authority to preach or teach except it were by him (Alma) from God.

D&C 17:12b ...he is to be ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him.

D&C 68:1f Go ye into all the world; preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;

2) Authority has to be accepted and embraced by the man called – He must exercise his agency

D&C 63:15a And again, verily I say unto you, Those who desire in their hearts, in meekness, to warn sinners to repentance, let them be ordained unto this power; for this is a day of warning, and not a day of many words

Alma 8:8 Nevertheless, I did harden my heart, for I was called many times and I would not hear; Therefore, I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know [Amulek]

3) Authority has to be accepted by the people, by the Church in order to be effective

D&C 17:16a No person is to be ordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that church;

D&C 125:14c If my people will respect the officers whom I have called and set in the church, I will respect these officers; and if they do not, they cannot expect the riches of gifts and the blessings of direction. **(We must ask ourselves, “Are we worthy of this respect?”)**

✎ **“It is thus that his authority becomes real and effective...When a man acting under divine priesthood speaks and acts in the line of his commission”**

“Priesthood relation established between Christ and the priest by ordination, as symbolized by the vine and its branches, carries authority to officiate in whatever work the Lord requires, according to the light and power the Lord supplies. Under the priesthood the Lord is obligated to give this light and power, or other needful blessing, subject to the servant’s worthiness; and the servant or priest has need to hold himself receptive and worthy, as also to wisely use such blessings when given. **It is thus that his authority becomes real and effective**” ...*The Nature of Priesthood*, Charles Fry, pg. 6

Joseph Smith, Jr. on Priesthood "The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven: and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness, that they may be conferred upon us it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins, to gratify our pride, vain ambition, or to exercise dominion or compulsion over the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, then amen to the priesthood, or to the authority of that man." — *Times & Seasons, Vol. 1, pages 131-131 as quoted in The Priesthood Journal, July, 1934, page 24 under Standards of Priesthood.*

D&C 68:1b-1d And, behold and lo, this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth; and this is the ensample unto them, that **they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost**; and whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost **shall be Scripture; shall be the will of the Lord; shall be the mind of the Lord; shall be the word of the Lord; shall be the voice of the Lord**, and the power of God unto salvation: 1d behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants:

4. Priesthood Not Dependent on Us

✎ **"The offices of the priesthood can exist with or without an occupant."**

“The removing of the officer does not destroy the office any more than the death of the President of the United States destroys the office which he holds ... So it is in all the essential offices of the government. This is true of the kingdom of God or church of Jesus Christ. God designated men for the several offices of the priesthood. They were duly authorized to occupy them. When anyone of them was removed, by death or otherwise, another was appointed to succeed him in the same office. As precedents, we refer the reader to the instance of appointing Matthias to the "bishopric" or "office" held by Judas Iscariot. (Acts i.16-26.) Matthias was "numbered with the eleven apostles." *Presidency and Priesthood*, William H. Kelley

“The offices of the priesthood are varied, bear distinctive names, and are made continuous. **The occupants may be removed, but the offices remain, having been fixed by the hand of Deity.** Those permitted to hold the several positions take the name of the office to which they are respectively assigned, not the office the names of the persons. No one can rightly assume to act in the offices of the priesthood until he is duly appointed by the great Author of the institution, and complies perfectly with the laws and usages governing such appointments.” *Presidency and Priesthood*, William H. Kelley

5. Christ called, and ordained the twelve after seeking council with God

✎ **Luke 6:12 -13** And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom -also he named apostles

Mark 3:13 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

John 17:18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world

Matthew chapter 10 provides insight into the ministry that Christ called the Apostles too:

Commissioned: [Mat 10:3] *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, [Mat 10:7] Heal the sick; cleanse the lepers; raise the dead; cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.*

Sent as sheep in the midst of wolves: Mat 10:14] *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise servants, and as harmless as doves.*

Remember, disciple is not above his master: [Mat 10:21] *Remember, the disciple is not above his master; nor the servant above his lord. It is enough that the disciple be as his master, and the servant as his lord.*

Don't fear those who can kill the body: [Mat 10:25] *And fear not them who are able to kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Confess me before men: [Mat 10:28] *Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. [Mat 10:29] But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.*

Think not that I bring Peace: [Mat 10:30] *Think not, that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. [Mat 10:31] For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*

If you love anything more than me, ye are not worthy of me: [Mat 10:32] *He who loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he who loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. [Mat 10:33] And he who taketh not his cross*

and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

(See also - *III Nephi 5:12-23; 6:1-2*)

6. Some denominations say there is no need for "Ordination." If this is true—Why Did Christ Ordain the Twelve?

✎ "They were chosen, named, and ordained apostles. Why ordain them? Why not send them without an ordination? Ordination is the conferring of authority upon an individual that he may properly perform the duties upon which he is sent. Could the apostles have accomplished the errand upon which they were sent, or even have been sent, without an *ordination*? If so, why ordain them? Why go through a useless and dead form? To argue that the apostles could have been sent as competent ministers without an ordination, is to charge Jesus with performing a work of no validity, a sham. None knew better than he what was necessary.

'I admit," says the objector, "that Jesus held the Melchisedec priesthood, which was necessary to his ministry, but I do not believe that the apostles held it." Query: What was that authority, then, which conferred upon the apostles when Jesus ordained them? If they could preach the gospel, heal the sick, administer the Spirit, cast out devils, etc., without the priesthood, why could not Jesus? He was their chief in point of office and character. Was the priesthood of any benefit to him? If not, why was it conferred on him? Evidently it was the authority by which he ministered and established his church. The apostles were his authorized agents in preaching the gospel and building [the Kingdom.] They too, then, must have held a like authority.

'Jesus said, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them." [John xvii.18.] His Father sent him into the world holding the Melchisedec priesthood. The apostles, to be sent like him, must have received a like authority or priesthood." *Presidency and Priesthood, William H. Kelley*

7. OUR Latter Day Commission

✎ **D&C 85:23a-b** Therefore, tarry ye, and labor diligently, that you may be perfected in your ministry, to go forth among the Gentiles for the last time, as many as the mouth of the Lord shall name, to bind up the law, and seal up the testimony, and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment, which is to come; that their souls may escape the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination, which await the wicked, both in this world, and in the world to come.

✎ **D&C 84:2a-d and 3&4** Therefore, thus saith the Lord unto you, **with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers, for ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God: therefore your life and the priesthood hath remained, and must needs remain, through you and your lineage, until the restoration of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began.** Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savor unto my people Israel. The Lord hath said it. Amen.

✎ Urgency of the Hour - If not now, When?

D&C 135:2b-3a. The hastening time is here and greater unity than ever before is necessary if the forces of opposition are to be met; and such unity will prevail if those holding the priesthood will remember their commission to preach the gospel, and each officer will strive to discharge his own duty and magnify his calling. The promise has been given that no power shall stay the hand of God in the accomplishment of his purposes among his people;

D&C 132:3-4 I admonish the Church, and particularly those of the priesthood, that the hastening time being upon us there is great necessity for confidence in the men of the Church chosen for positions of great responsibility, and all should consecrate of their talents, abilities, and substance for the prosecution of the great work intrusted to us. Everywhere the demand for great activity exists, and for the accomplishment of our work the great essential is fraternal cooperation in service to man and devoted consecration to God and his work.

C. Characteristics and Nature of Priesthood

Lesson learning objectives: To understand...

- that Christ is our perfect example in all things, particularly as it pertains to fulfilling the priesthood covenant
- that Christ exemplified perfect *Humility, Obedience, and Love*, which priesthood must emulate
- that the nature of priesthood involves being good and faithful *Stewards, Servants, and Shepherds*
- that priesthood will be held accountable for fulfilling, or not fulfilling, faithfully their priesthood covenant

1. Christ, as in all things, is our perfect example. He establishes and exemplifies the Pattern

✎ Two Different Approaches

Satan's Approach—And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying, That Satan whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning: And he came before me, saying, Behold I, send me, I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore, give me

thine honor. **Gen 3:1-2**

Christ's Approach—But behold, my beloved Son, which was my beloved and chosen from the beginning, said unto me: Father, **thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.** **Gen 3:3**

✎ Characteristics of Christ's Nature—Humility, Obedience and Love

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;

1. Who, being in the form of God, thought it

not robbery to be equal with God; But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; And being found in fashion as a man, **he humbled himself** and

2. **became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.**
3. ***(1 John 3:16)* Hereby perceive we the love of Christ, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

John 12:49-50 For I have not spoken of myself: but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

 **Following Christ's Example—Characteristics of a faithful minister involves humility, obedience and love/charity**

Matthew 26:25 And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall observe to do the things which ye have seen me do, and bear record of me even unto the end.

Humility Enjoined:

Acts 20:18-20 Ye know...after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, **Serving the Lord with all humility of mind**, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews; And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

1 Peter 5:5 ...Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

D&C 18:4b-c And thou shalt declare glad tidings; yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and among every people

that thou shalt be permitted to see. **And thou shalt do it with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers.**

D&C 102:3e for, behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful, and continue in humility before me;

D&C 133:2a Let the Quorum of Twelve be admonished that to discharge the responsibilities of the burden of the missionary work upon them, they should in **humility** before God and in sincerity of purpose apply themselves to this great task with unreserved devotion.

Obedience Enjoined:

Romans 1:1, 5 Paul, an apostle, a servant of God, called of Jesus Christ, and separated to preach the gospel...by whom we have received grace and apostleship, through obedience, and faith in his name, to preach the gospel among all nations;

John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Love/Charity Enjoined:

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

D&C 11:4b and no one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care.

D&C 16:4d And if you have not faith, hope, and **charity**, you can do nothing.

D&C 131:4a The Spirit saith further, that the spirit of distrust and want of confidence in those who are called and ordained to act in the various responsible positions in the priesthood and in authority in the church is unbecoming those professing faith in God, Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit of truth, **and evinces a serious lack of that charity** which Paul, an

apostle of Christ, declared to be the quality of Christian virtue which thinketh no evil.

Joseph Smith Jr - "No power is inherent in priesthood save it be exercised...by persuasion, by longsuffering, by meekness, without hypocrisy, **without guile showing an increase in love, with a soul full of charity towards all men** and when virtue guards the thoughts unceasingly." **Joseph Smith, Times and Seasons, Vol. 1, pgs. 131-132**

 **THE DUTIES OF THE PREACHER.** By President Joseph Smith, son of the Martyr. Saints' Herald for May 10, 1890, page 289 (condensed excerpt).

"The preacher should represent Christ.

- 1) He should be clean in all things.
- 2) Must advocate the truth.
- 3) Strive to present the truth in such a way that he will attract men to it.
- 4) He should be honest with the world and with himself.
- 5) He must be observant of all the conditions of time, place and circumstances surrounding him when he stands before the people, and be equal to every occasion, observing the properties.
- 6) He should remember he is there to represent Christ and not his own smartness. He must be endowed with the spirit of Christ.
- 7) Must magnify his calling.
- 8) Be prompt, always ready for duty, trusting in God.
- 9) Respect the rights of all men.
- 10) Avoid carelessness in all things...uncouth gestures and useless habits of manner or speech.
- 11) Also frequent repetitions and unnecessary words. The too frequent use of the name of the Deity must be avoided.
- 12) Acquire a proper pronunciation. Avoid jesting in the sacred desk.

I close with Paul's injunction: 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.'" 2 Tim. 2:15, 16. *An Exegesis of the Priesthood, Gomer T Griffiths, Pg 58*

 **Priesthood involves being Bold and Faithful**

Moroni 8:18 Behold, I speak with boldness, having authority from God; and I fear not what man can do; for perfect love casteth out all fear; and I am filled with **charity**, which is everlasting love;

D&C 105:7c wherefore, whithersoever they shall send you, **go ye, and I will be with you**, and in whatsoever place ye shall **proclaim my name, an effectual door shall be opened unto you, that they may receive my word;**

D&C 29:3c And your whole labor shall be in Zion, with all your soul, from henceforth; yea, **you shall ever open your mouth in my cause, not fearing what man can do, for I am with you.** Amen.

Alma 21:133-134 Yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God...a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people: Yea...a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath, to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood.

Mark 4:31-32 And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, **Peace; be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.** And he said unto them, **Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?**

2. Our Relationship with Christ in providing His Ministry

 **Priesthood are to become friends of the Lord Jesus** as they educate themselves in his ways and partake of the gift of the Holy Ghost. They are his friends because they KNOW the way.

John 15:12-17 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends, **Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.** Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known

unto you, **Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit;** and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another

John 14:4; 11-12; 18; 26 - a) **...whither I go ye know; and the way ye know... 11** Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake. **12**...He that believeth on me, b) **the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father...18** I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you...**26** But c) **the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**

3. The Nature of Priesthood involves being a faithful and good Steward, Servant and Shepherd

I. Be Ye Faithful and Good Stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

✎ It has already been established that priesthood belongs to God. It has also already been established that all priesthood, in order to function, must be authorized and set apart by God. As such, **He alone is the owner**, and our relationship with Him and his priesthood, is that of being a *Steward*.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit; and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

✎ **Stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are authorized when they do God's bidding**

“When a man acting under divine priesthood speaks and acts in the line of his commission, his words and works are authoritative and are the same force and effect as if Christ himself had spoken and done them. They carry to the

hearers the responsibility of heeding and obeying, and they impose upon them the consequences of their decision, whether they accept and obey or disregard and reject; the one to blessing and life, and the other to condemnation and death.” *The Nature of Priesthood*, Charles Fry, pg. 6

D&C 68:1b-1c And, behold and lo, this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth; and this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be Scripture; shall be the will of the Lord; shall be the mind of the Lord; shall be the word of the Lord; shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation:

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

✎ **Stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are accountable**

D&C 83:6f-h Therefore, all that my Father hath shall be given unto him; and this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood. Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved; **but whoso breaketh this covenant, after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come.**

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful.

“He (Adam) is the head, and was told to multiply. The keys were first given to him and

by him to others. **He will have to give an account of his stewardship, and they to him.**

The priesthood is everlasting. *An Exegesis of the Priesthood*, Gomer T Griffiths, Pg 78

 **Stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are called according to their gifts and are to magnify and use those gifts for His purposes**

1 Peter 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If any man speak, let him speak as an oracle of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

D&C 16:5e And, behold, you are they who are ordained of me to ordain priests and teachers to declare my gospel, according to the power of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and according to the callings and gifts of God unto men; and I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it.

D&C 17:12a Every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon, is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him;

Evangelist Albert Carmichael and Patriarch Elbert A. Smith wrote on page 24, Vol. 6, No. 2, April, 1940 of *The Priesthood Journal, Use and Abuse of Spiritual Gifts*:

“The Spirit divides the gifts unto every man severally as **he** wills. The Spirit of God, being the mind of God knows just what gift or gifts to give each man. It is desired to impart to each individual and the group some fact, some knowledge and the Lord knows what gift to give and to whom to give it and when, that this knowledge will be imparted in the best way. It is presumed that the gifts are given to the ones who are best prepared to use them. For every gift, we are indebted to our Lord. Our payment must be made in fruits...Like all the gifts of God to man, they are given to use and to be used righteously. An unrighteous use of the gifts cannot produce a righteous fruit. **The gifts are given to be used and not to hold passively. Unless used, they will be taken away”**

 **Stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are to Learn their Duty and Magnify their Calling**

D&C 83:6c-d ...for whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies: they become the sons of Moses and of Aaron, and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom and the elect of God;

D&C 104:44a Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence. 44b He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved, shall not be counted worthy to stand. Even so. Amen.

“Yet, all who will, all who see, **may now prepare themselves.** Blessed are all such as **shall draw close to the Lord in lowliness of heart, in great love, sacrificially, and in great faith.** Such will be pillars of strength to God’s people, and they shall be instruments of power in His hands...If you are filled with a Godly concern, if you become of great faith, if you will call on Him in mighty prayer, if you will prepare yourselves, if you will go apart into the quietness of the woods or hills or desert places, or best of all, into the solemnities of holy sanctuaries—into places where you can listen for the still small voice—behold, He shall wondrously show you what lies ahead. He will show it to the spiritually awake among you, be they aged or young. God would make you strong for these times. He would have you take such steps in preparation as only He can show you.” *The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, pp. 6-8

 **Some priesthood Stewardships are very specific**

D&C 70:1a-c hear the word of the Lord, which I give unto my servant[s]...by the way of commandment unto them, for I give unto them a commandment; 1b wherefore hearken and hear, for thus saith the Lord unto them, **I, the Lord, have appointed them, and ordained them to be stewards over the revelations and**

commandments which I have given unto them, and which I shall hereafter give unto them; 1c and an account of this stewardship will I require of them in the day of judgment; wherefore I have appointed unto them, and this is their business in the church of God, to manage them and the concerns thereof; yea, the benefits thereof.

 **Brother Gomer T Griffiths offers the following admonitions and suggestions in regards to being Stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ:** “Doc. and Cov. Sec. 83:21a & b. “Therefore, let every man stand in his own office, and labor in his own calling; and let not the head say unto the feet it hath no need of the feet, for without the feet how shall the body be able to stand? Also, the body hath need of every member, that all may be edified together, that the system may be kept perfect.

‘The order of this priesthood designed by God for the accomplishment of His great purposes, was perfected by Him, therefore, if all who are holding any of these sacred appointments will acquaint themselves with the duties and prerogatives attaching to their office, and faithfully discharge the same, the end God has in view must and will be realized. He, primarily, is responsible and, so far as pertains to Him, as the great Controller of all these concerns, nothing can arise, which was not anticipated and hence not provided for, to necessitate any change. **God is not an experimentalist; but in His condescension has chosen mankind to co-operate with Himself in the scheme of salvation; and wonderfully great are the responsibilities devolving upon those whom St. Paul designates “Ambassadors of God,” who stand as Christ, between God and the people.** It will be seen then that if anything does go wrong so far as these matters are concerned, it would be folly to charge it upon a supposed imperfection in the system; the cause of the trouble will be, if we are honest with ourselves, traceable to imperfection in the human instrument; so that if through ignorance, or lethargy, or rebellion, we fail to perform our allotted portion of the work, we clog, and more or less disarrange the workings of this system to the hurt and detriment of the

whole body, but more particularly, more disastrously to ourselves.”

While God is long suffering and will bear with us patiently for a time—and there is a limit to even God’s long suffering—yet if we are unrepentant of and persistent in our neglect of duties Divinely delineated, but voluntarily assumed, He has declared we shall as a consequence be taken out of the way.

‘This is not by any means a violation of His revealed attributes, but rather a demonstration of them, because as the Great “All Father,” He could not consistently jeopardize the safety of the whole, out of regard for the unit. To do so would be an invitation to criticism and charge of favoritism. The safety of the greatest number being the object of His work, was also in His mind when formulating the system of the priesthood. **Let us not, then, blind ourselves to our own interest and especially to the interests of God’s work, but remember that all those who have accepted the honor of the priesthood have also been made partakers of its responsibilities, and whosoever will not learn his duty and diligently perform the appointed functions shall not be counted worthy to stand.** Doc. and Cov. Sec. 104:44a & b. “Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence. He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved, shall not be counted worthy to stand. Even so. Amen.” *An Exegesis of the Priesthood*, Gomer T Griffiths, Pg 53-54

II. Be Ye Faithful and Good Servants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

 **D&C 90:8b** I called you servants for the world’s sake, and you are their servants for my sake;

 **Christ’s example and expressions on being a Servant**

John 13:3-5, 12-17 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; **He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a**

basin, and he began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded...So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, **Know ye what I have done to you?** Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. **If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.** Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.** If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Luke 22:24-27 There was also a strife among them, who of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they who exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors. But it ought not to be so with you; **but he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he who is chief, as he who doth serve. For whether is he greater, who sitteth at meat, or he who serveth? I am not as he who sitteth at meat, but I am among you as he who serveth.**

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you. **But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister.** And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; **28 Even as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his life a ransom for man**

 **Examples of what it means to be a Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

John the Baptist – Favored by the Almighty King to be a chosen servant in his time, recognized that he was a servant of the Lamb of God —John 3:28-35 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me

witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He who hath the bride, is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. **He must increase, but I must decrease.** He who cometh from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he who cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and but few men receive his testimony. He who hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God giveth him not the Spirit by measure, for he dwelleth in him, even the fullness. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.

King Benjamin—an example of a Servant Leader - Who being a King, humbled himself and was a servant of his people, and the people of the Almighty King—Mosiah 1:38-51

...I have not commanded you to come up hither, that ye should fear me, or that ye should think that I, of myself, am more than a mortal man; But I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind; Yet, as I have been chosen by this people, and was consecrated by my father, and was suffered by the hand of the Lord that I should be a ruler, and a king over this people; and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power, to serve thee with all the might, mind, and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me; I say unto you, that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold nor silver, nor any manner of riches of you; **44 Neither have I suffered that ye [...he offers a # of other examples], and have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord, in all things which he hath commanded you; And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands, that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne; and of all these things which I have spoken, ye yourselves are**

witnesses this day. **Yet, my brethren, I have not done these things that I might boast, neither do I tell these things that thereby I might accuse you; but I tell you these things that ye may know that I can answer a clear conscience before God this day. Behold, I say unto you, that because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God.** And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; **that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God.** Behold, ye have called me your king; and if I, **whom ye call your king, do labor to serve you, then had not ye ought to labor to serve one another?** And behold, also, if I, **whom ye call your king, who has spent his days in your service, and yet has been in the service of God, doth merit any thanks from you, O how had you ought to thank your heavenly King!**

Ammon—consider what he accomplished as a servant: Alma 12:28-180

Alma 12:36 But Ammon said unto him, Nay, but I will be thy servant; therefore **Ammon humbled himself and became a servant to King Lamoni.—and as the King’s servant, and a servant of God, the Almighty King—he was able to serve both.**

Alma 12:79 Now when King Lamoni heard that Ammon was preparing his horses and his chariots, he was more astonished, because of the faithfulness of Ammon, saying, **80 Surely, there has not been any servant among all my servants, that has been so faithful as this man; for even he doth remember all my commandments to execute them...91 Behold, I am a man, and am thy servant; therefore, whatsoever thou desirest which is right, that will I do.** *97* And now if thou wilt tell me concerning these things, whatsoever thou desirest, I will give unto thee...*99* **Now Ammon being wise, yet harmless,** he said unto Lamoni, Wilt thou hearken unto my words, if I tell thee by what power I do these things? And this is the thing that I desire of thee. *100* And the king answered him and said, Yea, I will believe all thy words; and thus he was caught with guile. *101*

And Ammon began to speak unto him with boldness, and said unto him, Believest thou that there is a God?...111 And King Lamoni said, I believe all these things which thou hast spoken. **Art thou sent from God? 112 Ammon said unto him, I am a man; and man in the beginning, was created after the image of God, and I am called by his Holy Spirit to teach these things unto this people, that they may be brought to a knowledge of that which is just and true; 113** And a portion of that Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge, and also power, according to my faith and desires which are in God. *114* Now when Ammon had said these words, he began at the creation of the world, and also the creation of Adam, and told him all the things concerning the fall of man...*118* And he expounded unto them all the records and scriptures, from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem, down to the present time...*119* But this is not all; for he expounded unto them the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world; *120* And he also made known unto them concerning the coming of Christ; and all the works of the Lord did he make known unto them. **121 And it came to pass that after he had said all these things, and expounded them to the king, that the king believed all his words.**

Paul—recognized that he was called to be a servant of God to serve God’s people, and what that meant.

Romans 1:1 Paul, an apostle, a servant of God, called of Jesus Christ, and separated to preach the gospel,

Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

2 Timothy 2:1-15 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others

also. **Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.** Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to the gospel; Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. **Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.** For this is a faithful saying, If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him he also will deny us; If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

☞ **Who then is that faithful and wise servant?
Who is the unfaithful and foolish servant?**

Luke 12: 40 Verily I say unto you, **Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching;** for he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them...**49-54** And the Lord said, I speak unto those whom the Lord shall make rulers over his household, to give his children their portion of meat in due season. And they said, **Who then is that faithful and wise servant?** And the Lord said unto them, **It is that servant who watcheth, to impart his portion of meat in due season.** **52** Blessed be that servant whom his Lord shall find, when he cometh, so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. **But the evil servant is he who is not found watching...55-57** The Lord of that servant will

come in a day he looketh not for, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him down, **and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.** And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not for his Lord's coming, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. **For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom the Lord has committed much, of him will men ask the more.**

Matthew 25:14-31 For it is like as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway went on his journey. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same; and gained other five talents. And likewise he who received two talents, he also gained other two. But he who had received one, went and digged in the earth and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received the five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord said unto him, **Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord...** Then he who had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not scattered. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; and lo, here is thy talent; take it from me as thou hast from thine other servants, for it is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, O wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not scattered. Having known this, therefore, thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, and at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. I will take, therefore, the talent from you, and give it unto

him who hath ten talents. **For unto every one who hath obtained other talents, shall be given, and he shall have an abundance. But from him that hath not obtained other talents, shall be taken away even that which he hath received.** And his lord shall say unto his servants, Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

D&C 60:1-3 Behold, thus saith, the Lord unto the elders of his church, who are to return speedily to the land from whence they came. Behold, it pleaseth me, that you have come up hither; but with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Woe unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them. **And it shall come to pass, if they are not more faithful unto me, it shall be taken away, even that which they have... Behold, they have been sent to preach my gospel among the congregations of the wicked; wherefore, I give unto them a commandment thus: Thou shalt not idle away thy time; neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known.**

D&C 116:2 Be ye very careful, for many elders have been ordained unto me, and are come under my condemnation, by reason of neglecting to lift up their voices in my cause, and for such there is tribulation and anguish: haply they themselves may be saved (if doing no evil) though their glory, which is given for their works, be withheld, or in other words their works are burned, not being profitable unto me.

Promises to the Faithful and Good Servant

D&C 68:1b-d And, behold and lo, this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth; and this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be Scripture; shall be the will of the Lord; shall be the mind of the Lord; shall be the word of the Lord; shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto

salvation: **behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants: wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I, the Lord, am with you and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come.**

Isaiah 41:10 *Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

John 14:16-18 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; **but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.** I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.

Alma 16:118-119 They did separate themselves one from another; **taking no thought for themselves what they should eat, or what they should drink, or what they should put on. And the Lord provided for them** that they should hunger not, neither should they thirst; yea, and **he also gave them strength**, that they should suffer no manner of afflictions, save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ.

III. Faithful and Good Shepherds of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Jesus is the Compassionate Shepherd

Mark 6:35 And Jesus when he came out, saw much people, **and was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd:** and he began to teach them many things.

Christ Is the Good Shepherd

John 10:10-17 I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. [His Purpose - More Life] I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. [What is required - Sacrifice] And the shepherd is not as a hireling, whose

own the sheep are not, who seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth the sheep and scattereth them. [*Protects the flock*]

For I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine [*Tends to the flock*]

... As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. [*Adding to the flock - Missionary*]

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. [*Give this life to gain another*]

Christ is the Door to the Sheepfold (Salvation)

John 10:1-9 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheepfold. All that ever came before me who testified not of me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

We Are Called to Be Co-Shepherds/Co-Laborers

Matthew 9:41-44 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and disease among the

people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then said he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.

Central purpose of Priesthood? Feed My Sheep

John 21:15-17 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep.

D&C 105:6a Now, I say unto you,--and what I say unto you I say unto all the Twelve,--Arise and gird up your loins, take up your cross, follow me, and feed my sheep.

Shepherds protect the flock

Acts 20:28-30 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Christ is the Chief Shepherd and Lord - His Servants are Shepherds, not Lords, who serve under Him

1 Peter 5:1-4 The elders which are among you I

exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed;

- a. Feed the flock of God which is among you,
- b. taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly;
- c. not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
- d. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, **ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.**

 **A healthy flock starts with healthy sheep - A good shepherd is actively engaged in providing "Pastoral" ministry** (Source unknown)

- He sees that they are fed and cared for
- He sees that they are safe
- He sees that they feel assured
- He sees that they remain healthy
- He protects them from danger
- He drives out danger when it enters the flock
- He knows and cares for each sheep

 **The good shepherd knows his flock**

- Their strength and potentiality, as well as their limitations and weaknesses.
- And reveals their better to their lesser selfhood for such improvement as may be made
- Inspires each to endeavor all he may become
- Relates each to each for best growth in life.
- And sees that each has opportunity to participate in group activity.
- For in serving others and the cause, one realizes his best development in character as in life powers and graces.
- The good "overseers of the flock," the elders, know their people so well they may "call them by name." Nor no less do the "standing ministers," the priests, teachers, and deacons, do for these same people, who are also their people.

Priesthood Study Outlines, 1946-Refinements of Christian Character, by John F. Garver

 **Two Shepherds – Two Folds**

Alma 3:62-70 Behold, I say unto you, that the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you, which is the name of Christ; And if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold, ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd.

And now if ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd of what fold are ye?

Behold, I say unto you, that the devil is your shepherd, and ye are of his fold; and now who can deny this? Behold, I say unto you, Whosoever denieth this, is a liar and a child of the devil; For I say unto you, that whatsoever is good, cometh from God. and whatsoever is evil, cometh from the devil:

Therefore, if a man bringeth forth good works, he hearkeneth unto the voice of the good shepherd; and he doth follow him; But whosoever bringeth forth evil works, the same becometh a child of the devil: for he hearkeneth unto his voice, and doth follow him. And whosoever doeth this must receive his wages of him; therefore, for his wages he receiveth death, as to things pertaining unto righteousness, being dead unto all good works.

 **Unfaithful Shepherds**

Ezekiel 34:1-8 And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, ... Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds;

1) Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. (Priest Craft) **2)** The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, **3)** neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but **4)** with force and with cruelty have

ye ruled them. [Consequence to the Sheep/Flock] And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

God's Response to the Shepherds

Ezekiel 34:9 Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore, for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

God Is the Good Shepherd

Ezekiel 34:11-16 For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered: so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where thy have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven

away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

4. The key to unlocking our priesthood is our ability to exercise Humility and Charity—the opposite is Priestcraft

 **2 Nephi 11:106-108** He commandeth that **there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain, and praise of the world: but they seek not the welfare of Zion.** Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment, that all men should have charity, which charity is love. **And except they should have charity, they were nothing: wherefore, if they should have charity, they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish.** (See also: *Alma 1:3-24*)

 “[D&C 118:4c...Let no one deceive himself that he shall not account for his stewardship unto Me.] is often misinterpreted as being applicable to temporal stewardship, but Joseph Smith, III in *The Saints Herald* of July 24, 1937 makes it plain that this is not the case. Speaking concerning this paragraph of Section 118, President Smith said: **“When priesthood is conferred upon anyone who is called, the ordination places a responsibility upon him for which he must answer directly to God.”** *The Nature and Stewardship of Priesthood* by Elder Robert Giertz – Updated March 4, 2004

5. Your Priesthood Calling is great responsibility and privilege

 “There is no greater treasure than that the intelligence, power, and glory of God should be put in the hands of men to use in the performance of his work. There is no greater honor than to be called a servant of Jesus Christ, to work with him and he with you, and to share with him the glory of achievement in the salvation of the human race. The greatest honors bestowed by kings and rulers are not to be compared with those so graciously given of

Jesus Christ to such as wholeheartedly respond to his call and offer themselves in faithful and loyal service. Their joy does not fade with this life but is extended and magnified in the everlasting kingdom of God.” *The Nature of Priesthood*, Charles Fry, pg. 66.

 **D&C 124:7b-7c ...that upon their fathers is laid a great and onerous burden, and they are called to engage in a great work, which shall bring them honor and glory, or shame, contempt and final great loss and destruction; as they shall in uprightness, faithfulness and diligence discharge their duties acceptably to God, or shall in carelessness, slothfulness, or wickedness fail in their calling and ministry therein;**

 **Remember, The Lord Jesus Christ specially prayed for those who God had given him**

John 17:5-11 O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. **I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.** And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. **Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.**

Luke 22:31-32 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired you, that he may sift the children of the kingdom as wheat. **But I have prayed for you,** that your faith fail not; and when you are converted strengthen your brethren.

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