

Living Waters

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Living Waters

Whoever shall drink of this well, shall thirst again; But whosoever drinketh of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 4:15-16

In the thirty-second chapter of Exodus, while Moses was conversing with God on Mount Sinai, the people of Israel created a molten calf and worshipped it, which resulted in God taking away the higher priesthood and ordinances. Although Israel repented soon after, we read throughout the Old Testament that sadly the children of Israel continued to persist in the worshiping of idols. During this time, the Lord told the prophet Jeremiah that the people of Israel had committed two evils, saying, “they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.¹”

The 1828 Webster Dictionary defines a cistern as an artificial reservoir or receptacle for holding water. Thus, instead of serving the Lord, who is the fountain of the living waters, Israel turned to artificial reservoirs that had no sustenance. For us today, the world and all its temptations is a representation of that broken cistern, and no matter how much we try to fill our life with the world, it will never bring satisfaction, fulfillment, everlasting life, or Zion. Please read from the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 1:3:

1:3a Wherefore the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear; **1:3b** prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh; and the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth; and the arm of the Lord shall be revealed; **1:3c** and the day cometh that they who will **not hear the voice of the Lord**, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, **shall be cut off** from among the people; **1:3d** for they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant; they seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness [the Kingdom of God], **1:3e** but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in **the likeness of the world**, and whose substance is that of **an idol**, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, **which shall fall**.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to take up our cross and deny ourselves of all ungodliness and every worldly lust, and keep the Lord’s commandments.² Jesus charged His disciples to be in the world but not of it. It is important to ask ourselves, how are we faring? Do we serve and worship God with a singleness of heart, or do we still have one foot in the world, seeking after the broken cistern that cannot satisfy? Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, “Whoever shall drink of this well [meaning

¹ Jeremiah 2:13

² Matthew 16:26

an earthly or worldly well], shall thirst again; But whosoever drinketh of the water which I shall give him *shall never thirst*; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him a well* of water springing up into *everlasting life*.³”

In Genesis, chapter seven, God told Enoch that He wept because of mankind’s disobedience. However, the Lord grieved not simply because man is disobedient to His commandments but more importantly, because we are disobedient to God’s desire for us. God said simply, “in the garden of Eden gave I unto man his agency; and unto thy brethren *have I said, and also* gave commandment, that they should love one another; and that they should choose me their Father.”⁴”

God yearns for each soul to have eternal life, and that we would choose Him because we love Him. Nevertheless, not only does God desire that our souls be filled with that unspeakable joy, but He also prepared a way for us to receive this gift from the beginning. “But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; Wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men; for behold he hath all power unto the fulfilling of all his words. And thus it is. Amen.”⁵ Please read from 1 Nephi 5:59 and 2 Nephi 1:66; 71-72:

5:59 And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God, he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them;

1:66 And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and *salvation is free*. **1:71** Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the holy Messiah: for he is full of grace and truth. **1:72** Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a **broken heart and a contrite spirit**; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

In first Nephi, chapter three, Nephi gave us his account of the vision of the Tree of Life, which consisted of several spiritual symbolisms, one of them being the fountain of living waters. In Nephi’s account, not only was he able to see his father’s vision, but also the interpretation of it. “And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a *representation of the love of God*.”⁶”

The word of God is the light and life of the world, it is truth and righteousness, or in other words, it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By holding fast to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are lead to the fountain of living waters, which is the representation of the love of God. What better represents the love of God than our savior and redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ? “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,

³ John 4:15-16

⁴ Genesis 7:40

⁵ 1 Nephi 2:100-102

⁶ 1 Nephi 3:68

and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.⁷” Please read the following Scripture from Psalms 23:1-6:

23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. **23:2** He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. **23:3** He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. **23:5** Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. **23:6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Brothers and sisters, instead of turning to a cistern that cannot satisfy our hunger or quench our thirst, let us come to the fountain of living waters, which is Jesus Christ, which is like a well within us that springs forth-everlasting life. For us to have this well of Christ within us, we must covenant with Him and partake of that bread of life.

The Bread of Life

In the sixth chapter of John, Jesus Christ told the 5,000 people at the Sea of Galilee, to seek Him not because they were fed and made full with five loaves of bread and two fishes, but because He was the bread of life. When the people asked Jesus to give them this bread, He replied, “I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst...He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life...I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.⁸” Further, Jesus said in Matthew, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.⁹”

In both Scriptures, the one from John and the other from Matthew, Jesus is referring to the same object. Life, or rather eternal life, does not come from worldly or earthly bread but from the living bread, which is the word of God, or in other words the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His Gospel is the light and life of the world. Paul described it this way, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,” meaning that without the hope that Jesus offers we would all be miserable. “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ *shall all be made alive*.¹⁰”

Jesus said that He is the true vine and that we are the branches. If we root ourselves in the Son of God and abide in His word, we will bring forth much fruit, which is the same fruit that Lehi partook in his vision of the Tree of Life. “And it came to pass that I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make *one happy*. And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it

⁷ 1 John 4:10

⁸ John 6:35; 47-48; 51

⁹ Matthew 4:4

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:17-22

was *most sweet* above all that I ever before tasted...and as I partook of the fruit thereof, it filled my soul with *exceeding great joy*.¹¹ The fruit was a representation of God’s love, which is eternal life.

For us to receive the gift of eternal life, we are commanded to be baptized and born again into the Kingdom of God, and this is because of our transgressions and because no unclean thing can stand in the presence of God. Thus, even before the foundation of the world, the way was prepared that the atonement should be made, and God paid for this atonement Himself by sending His Only Begotten Son to suffer the pains of the cross and the burden of our sins that the world might be redeemed.

Therefore, as Jesus was resurrected unto life, so are we raised to eternal life if we put off that old body of sin through the waters of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands, and become a new creature who is cleansed from all unrighteousness. “For, by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified; and by the blood ye are sanctified. 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.”¹²

Through the gift of the Holy Ghost we read, “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.”¹³ The Holy Ghost is that well within us that will lead us into all truth and spring forth-everlasting life if we continue to hold fast to the rod of iron. [For more on the Holy Ghost, read **Chapter Three**]. “He that keepeth his commandments, receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth, and knoweth all things.”¹⁴ Moreover, Jesus said, “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.”¹⁵

However, for us to receive the gift of everlasting life our path does not end here at baptism as discussed in **Chapter Ten**, but it only just begins. Nephi spoke to his people in the plainness of the Lord, saying, “ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life. And now behold...this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven, whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God.”¹⁶ Please read the following from Romans 6:3-11

6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? **6:4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should ***walk in newness of life***.

¹¹ 1 Nephi 2:49-52

¹² Genesis 6:63; 65

¹³ Genesis 6:64

¹⁴ D&C 90:4e

¹⁵ D&C 90:6a

¹⁶ 2 Nephi 13:28-31

6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the **likeness of his resurrection**; **6:6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. **6:7** For he that is dead to sin is ***freed from sin***. **6:8** Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; **6:9** Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. **6:10** For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. **6:11** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If we have been freed from sin by entering into the covenant of baptism [both of the water and the Spirit], how then are we to live? Instead of living or conforming to the world, we should follow the blessed example of our Lord and Savior, and live with our eye single to the glory and will of God. Please read the following Scripture passage from Doctrine and Covenants, Section 77:4a-c, and notice how Jesus will lead those who believe in Him.

77:4a Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father has in his own hands, and prepared for you; and ye can not bear all things now; **77:4b** nevertheless be of good cheer, ***for I will lead you along***; the kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours; and the riches of eternity are yours; **77:4c** and he who receiveth all things, with thankfulness, shall be made glorious...

The Kingdom of God

In the Doctrine and Covenants, Section Twenty-Two, God told Moses, “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.¹⁷” It is God’s desire and will that all of His creation might receive eternal life, which is a happiness and joy that cannot be fully understood in this life unless it is revealed by the power of the Holy Ghost. Nonetheless, the book of Revelation, chapters seven and twenty-one, give us a glimpse of eternal life with God.

7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. **7:16** They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. **7:17** For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. **21:4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

¹⁷ D&C 22:23b

In these verses, John gave us a small but precious understanding not only of God's Kingdom, but also of God's desire to share the gift of everlasting life. Imagine God sitting on His throne with a gift of unending joy and happiness that is unspeakable and indescribable, but with no one around to partake of it. God not only desires our personal salvation but the salvation of all men [see 2 Nephi 11:95-105]. Thus, we see in the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done *on earth, as it is done* in heaven."¹⁸

In order for God's will, which is to bring to pass the eternal life of man, to be done on this earth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ that brings forth that blessed fruit must be preached and spread to all the earth. If we continue to seek after the living waters and hold true to Jesus Christ, God will use us to build His Kingdom and to perform His will on earth. Paul wrote in second Timothy, chapter two, that everyone who takes upon them the name of Christ should depart from iniquity. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."¹⁹

Jesus Christ told His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,"²⁰ and, "seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness."²¹ Jesus was not necessarily telling the disciples to build a physical kingdom, but a spiritual condition among the people that was of one heart and one mind just as the people of Zion did. "And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness."²² The people of Zion lived with a singleness of heart, which was in Christ Jesus and to the glory of God. If the saints in the latter days will strive to do the same, the physical Kingdom of Zion will again have place on the earth.

The duty and calling of the Church of Jesus Christ is to build up the Kingdom of God and to establish the cause of Zion, the city where Jesus Christ will dwell again on the earth and reign in righteousness for a space of thousand years [see Genesis 7:67-73]. Only after this thousand years has ended and the subsequent little season, will the final judgment at the bar of God commence, and the earth will "be sanctified from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared for the celestial glory; for after it hath filled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the *presence of God the Father*; that bodies who are of the celestial kingdom may possess it for ever and ever."²³ Please read the following from Doctrine and Covenants, Sections 6:3a-c, 11:3a-5b, 23:4a, and 29:3c

6:3a Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion: **6:3b** seek not for riches but for wisdom; and, behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. **6:3c** Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.

¹⁸ Matthew 6:10-11

¹⁹ 2 Timothy 2:21

²⁰ Mark 16:14

²¹ Matthew 6:38

²² Genesis 7:23

²³ D&C 85:4c-d

11:3a Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, **11:3b** Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. **11:4a** Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work; **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. **11:5a** Behold, I am the light and the life of the world, that speak these words; **11:5b** therefore, give heed with your might, and ***then you are called***. Amen.

23:4a For thou shalt devote all thy service in Zion. And in this thou shalt have strength.

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.

The Everlasting Covenant

When the people asked Jesus in the third book of Nephi, chapter twelve, “whereby shall we call this church?”²⁴ Jesus responded by asking them if they had read the Scriptures that say, “Ye must take upon you the name of Christ.” Furthermore, Jesus said, “whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name, that he will bless the church for my sake; and how be it my church, save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses’ name, then it be Moses’ church; or if it be called in the name of a man, then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name, then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.”²⁵

The duty of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ, which is built on His Gospel, is to labor with all our might to build up God’s Kingdom and to serve in Zion, just as Jesus did when He took upon Him the form of a servant. [Read more on the Church in **Chapter Seven**]. While Jesus lived on this earth, He preached nothing but the Kingdom of God, for we read in the fourth chapter of Luke that when “the people sought him, and came unto him, and desired him that he should not depart from them. But he said unto them, *I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent.*”²⁶ However, Jesus did more than just teaching, but He also labored with all His might and was obedient to God even to death. How then are we to live?

If we are members in His Church, then we must love God and keep His commandments. John explained that, “whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, *even as he walked*.”²⁷ Moreover, John said, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue only; but in deed and in truth.”²⁸ In other words, for us to truly take upon us the name of Jesus Christ requires more than entering into

²⁴ 3 Nephi 12:16

²⁵ 3 Nephi 12:18-20

²⁶ Luke 4:42-43

²⁷ 1 John 2:5-6

²⁸ 1 John 3:18

the covenant of baptism, but to walk in the way of the Lord and labor with our whole soul in the service of God, which is the cause of Zion.

Jesus told the people in third Nephi, “And if it so be that the church is built upon my gospel, then will the Father shew forth his own works in it.²⁹” The Master also spoke to the disciples, saying, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.³⁰” What work is greater than establishing the cause of Zion? Please read the following from the Doctrine and Covenants, section 45:2a-d:

45:2a Hearken, O ye people of my church, and ye elders, listen together, and hear my voice, while it is called today, and harden not your hearts; **45:2b** for verily I say unto you that I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the light and the life of the world; a light that shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. **45:2c** I came unto my own, and my own received me not; but unto as many as received me gave I power to do many miracles and to become the **sons of God**, and even unto them that believed on my name gave I power to obtain eternal life. **45:2d** And even so I have sent **mine everlasting covenant into the world**, to be ***a light to the world***, and to be a standard for my people and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me.

The members of the Church of Jesus Christ are called to prepare the way for Christ’s return. Therefore, God sent His everlasting covenant to world to be a standard, or in other words, a law by which others are to be adjusted,³¹ for His people to follow. Moreover, His everlasting covenant is meant to be a light to the world. If the world is in darkness, meaning a lack of knowledge of Jesus Christ, how will it be able to know the truth unless there is a light to both guide and beckon them?

Nonetheless, Jesus has said, “Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.³²” In other words, the Kingdom of God cannot be established merely by preaching repentance and baptism in the name of the Son, but the Kingdom must be built with a singleness of heart. The Lord has also said, “And they who are not sanctified through the law which I have given unto you, even the law of Christ, must inherit another kingdom...For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom, can not abide a celestial glory.³³” Are we living by the law of the Celestial Kingdom? If not, then we need to ask ourselves why not. In order for Zion to be, we as individuals must first come and partake of the fountain of living waters, which requires that we live purely by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which requires our whole soul.

²⁹ 3 Nephi 12:22

³⁰ John 14:12

³¹ Webster’s 1828 Revised Unabridged Dictionary

³² D&C 102:2c

³³ D&C 85:5a-b

Conclusion

“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.” For God’s will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven, the Lord requires a people who are willing to draw near to the fountain of living waters and become His sons and daughters, and forsake all unrighteousness for the sake of the Kingdom of God and Zion. If we draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh to us. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”³⁴

Have we allowed Jesus Christ to lead us to the living waters, which brings knowledge and truth and refreshes the soul? “Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.” Are we living by the law of the Celestial Kingdom? Do we know the principles of the Celestial Kingdom? For the cause of Zion to be established, each of us must come to know Jesus Christ. “For behold, again I say unto you, that if ye will enter in by the way and receive the Holy Ghost, it will shew unto you all things ye should do. Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ; and there will be no more doctrine given, until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh.”³⁵

Jesus Christ is the fountain of living waters that brings forth that sweet and most desirable fruit, which is eternal life. If we are rooted in the word of God, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and walk in all the ways of the Lord, then we will drink from the fountain of living waters. By each one of us coming and partaking of the living waters, we will know and abide in the law of the Celestial Kingdom. Only then will we be able to do His greatest work, establishing the cause Zion.

The Church of God was restored to the earth and the Lord’s call has been given, how will we respond? In closing, please read the following Scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 6:16:

6:16a Therefore fear not, little flock, do good, let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my Rock, they cannot prevail. **6:16b** Behold, I do not condemn you, go your ways and sin no more: perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you; look unto me in every thought, doubt not, fear not: **6:16c** behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; be faithful; keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

³⁴ John 14:21

³⁵ 2 Nephi 14:6-7