

A Visit with Denver Snuffer

Questions and Answers
5-13-15 Tim Malone

Question Three: *In the Phoenix or Mesa lecture (9-9-14), you stated, “The Lord has said to me in His own voice, ‘I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you.’ Therefore, I want to caution those who disagree with me, to feel free, to feel absolutely free to make the case against what I say. Feel free to disagree, and make your contrary arguments. If you believe I err, then expose the error and denounce it. But take care; take care about what you say concerning me for your sake, not for mine. I live with constant criticism. I can take it. But I do not want you provoking Divine ire by unfortunately chosen words if I can persuade you against it.”*

In Genesis 12:3, The Lord said unto Abraham, “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.” Abraham was further blessed to be the father of many nations, that in him “shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Abraham was a prophet. Isaac and Jacob were prophets. Abraham referred to the Fathers going back to Adam. You spoke about that in the talk on plural marriage and elsewhere. It seems there is something significant about connecting to the Fathers. Abraham was a patriarch. The LDS Church no longer has a presiding patriarch, or even such an office. Is there a patriarch on the earth today who can connect us to the Fathers?

ANSWER (Denver): Well, the simple answer is there's always one on the earth. That has been true from Adam to the present.

(Tim): John the Beloved.

(Denver): Yes.

Remember that in Nauvoo the Lord had offered to reconnect the Saints, with the clearly defined condition that for that to happen it was necessary for an acceptable temple to be constructed where He could come and restore the connection. The reconnection is ordinance-based, and will require an acceptable temple before it goes beyond the single representative.

First, ideas need to be advanced and accepted. Then second, we need to act on the ideas primarily by repenting and opening ourselves to the influence of God. Third, we have to be humble and patient and willing to practice the religion before we can have any hope of God deciding to gather us.

Practical experience is absolutely necessary. Theories and pretensions are not going to get us anywhere. The gospel requires hard won virtuous experience and not just theoretical or imaginary virtues. Everyone can theorize the virtues that are necessary to gather people together and live together in harmony. Everyone can envision themselves as one of the residents of the City of Peace. But the practical experience required to iron out our selfishness and competitiveness so that we can actually live in peace is another order of magnitude harder.

In the Nauvoo City Council minutes you see them grappling with a society that is trying to be composed of Saints, and the practical problem-solving that happened. There were moments when I was reading the Nauvoo City Council minutes when I was laughing out loud, because they go to solve one problem but the solution creates another.

Basically people are discourteous of one another. Because they are discourteous of one another the City Council adopted an ordinance in order to end one discourtesy, only to create yet another discourtesy on top of that.

For example, one of the problems that they had was that Nauvoo was organized as a city in which everyone had a garden plot. Because most of the garden plots were not fenced, horses and foot traffic would go through the gardens. That killed the plants and caused the destruction of needed foodstuffs. They couldn't get people to build fences around their gardens despite encouraging them to do so. The solution to the problem was to turn the hogs loose, because when the hogs are loose they go in the gardens and root around, killing the plantings. And so they adopted an ordinance that let hogs in Nauvoo go free. In pretty short order that produced the required fences they wanted, at the expense of creating a hog problem. There were hog wallows in the middle of the streets of Nauvoo. Until finally some guy, tired of the hog problem, went out and killed, butchered and ate a couple hogs that another guy said belong to him. The owner sued him, and they had the public fight over it.

The point of this isn't hogs and the Nauvoo City Council, the point of this is we need practical experience and not theory. The way in which the practical experience can be had is in gathering in fellowships and societies, collecting our own tithing, and then grappling with the fact that there is a pile of money sitting there, which is ever a temptation, and to deal with that in a responsible way. That forces individuals to confront their own self will, their own pride, their own desires, their own jealousy, their own envy, their own ambition, and their own covetousness.

In the fellowships that have been organized there have been moments of profound breakthroughs in the kind of attributes required for Zion. One group, when they begin their meeting, gathers all the needs on written slips of paper and put all of the needs together in an unopened basket. Then they gather the money, which is always cash, into another unopened container. They don't know how much cash there is. Without opening the cash then, they first open the needs. As a group they reason together and agree on what the priority of the needs are, so that they have a list of the most compelling, and on down.

Once they know what the most compelling, the second, the third, the fourth are, they open and count the money. On one occasion, there was a married couple whose need could be satisfied because there was enough money, but they looked at the person next in line in priority behind them, and concluded that in their heart, they thought that need greater than their own. If they satisfy the next person's need, there would be nothing left for them. So they voluntarily passed on their priority and took none of the money, and allowed it all to go to the next person in line behind them.

That is a couple that I would willingly add to a community, because they've learned self-sacrifice. They are no threat, and are instead an ideal contributor.

Someone who advocates incessantly, "We've got to live the United Order! We've got to have consecration," —because he intends to benefit from that change and better his circumstances—is unfit to be gathered. He would destroy Zion because he is selfish and thinking of what he can gain. Someone who says, "What can I give?" at the cost of his own self-sacrifice, and yet is willing to live the Law of Consecration in order to bless and benefit *others*, not expecting themselves to be blessed or benefited but instead expect themselves to carry a burden, those people can be gathered. They present no threat. They can be "one" with others. They are willing to lose themselves, as Christ instructed.

The way in which those people get identified is by practical experience, which is what the fellowshiping communities are designed, by the inspiration of God, to allow to now begin to take place. Every one of us theorizes themselves a great candidate for Zion. But go out and get some practical experience and see how great a candidate you truly are. You will be disappointed in yourself. Most of us would be anyway.