

“So That All Things May Be Done In Order”

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“The duty of the members after they are received by baptism: The elders or priests are to have a sufficient time to expound all things concerning the church of Christ to their understanding, previous to their partaking of the sacrament, and being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the elders; **so that all things may be done in order**. And the members shall manifest before the church, and also before the elders, by a godly walk and conversation that they are worthy of it, that there may be works and faith agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, walking in holiness before the Lord.” D&C 17:18

The Joy And Peace in Believing

In February of 1993 I was preparing for a baptismal service for several members of a family to whom we had been providing ministry. Through prayer and fasting, I had been inquiring of the Lord to know how we should proceed with the appropriate ordinances. I was scheduled to arrange the baptismal service and a passage of scripture from Mosiah (9:33-50) continued to be a guiding light to my thoughts, especially the following verses:

“And now it came to pass that Alma took Helam, he being one of the first, and went and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying, *O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with **holiness of heart***. And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said, Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you

are dead, as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world. And after Alma had said these words, both Alma and Helam were buried in the water; and they arose and came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit.” Mosiah 9:43-45

With the desire that we might “do this work with holiness of heart,” I continued in prayer and fasting to the Lord, believing that He would lead us by His Spirit “into all truth” (cf. John 16:13-15). During this time of preparation, I received the impress of the Spirit of the Lord that “all things are to be done in order.” I was not exactly sure what that meant, so I prayed that all things would be done in order to the pleasing of God. The two primary concerns on my heart were that those who had requested baptism would indeed receive a remission of

their sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost according to the promise of the gospel. Procedural matters were not the primary focus of my prayers.

On one particular day, I was studying the instruction given in Section 17:18 in the Doctrine & Covenants about how there should be a space of time between baptism and confirmation so that the elders and priests could instruct “those who are baptized into the church” (D&C 17:8c).¹ The phrase in this scripture, “so that all things may be done in order,” jumped out at me with much joy and affirmation. Here was the phrase which had been impressed upon me so persistently. And so I read the qualifying statements which preceded it:

“The elders or priests are to have a sufficient time to expound all things concerning the church of Christ to their understanding, *previous to their [1] partaking of the sacrament, and [2] being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the elders; so that all things may be done in order.*” D&C 17:18b (sequence numbers added for emphasis)

As I read this verse the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ filled me with great joy and assurance. And as I pondered the impress I was receiving that the sacrament should precede confirmation, a wonderful anticipation of blessing came flooding over me. Why? I did not know exactly why, but to this day I still cannot forget the joy of that moment.

Even when I look back upon that occasion in prayer I receive anew the affirmation that the Spirit of Jesus Christ showed me that it would be pleasing to Him for us to proceed as this scripture indicates. Truly the apostle Paul wrote, “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:7).

Yes, thoughts of how this squared with what I had been taught all my life and how we had al-

ways observed these ordinances in times past came into my mind, questioning what this understanding might mean. But the peace that passes our understanding kept my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6,7). I had asked and He had shown me according to the promise of the gospel (Matthew 7:12,13 & James 1:5).

Seek Ye Earnestly The Best Gifts

The Comforter kept bringing one scripture in particular to my remembrance (cf. John 14:26) from the Doctrine & Covenants which assured my hope (Hebrews 11:1) that I was believing correctly in His will of how these ordinances should be performed:

“Hearken, O ye people of my church, for verily I say unto you, that these things were spoken unto you for your profit and learning; but ***notwithstanding those things which are written, it always has been given to the elders of my church, from the beginning, and ever shall be, to conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit;*** nevertheless, ye are commanded never to cast anyone out from your public meetings, which are held before the world.

Ye are also commanded not to cast anyone, who belongeth to the church, out of your sacrament meetings; nevertheless, if any have trespassed, let him not partake until he makes reconciliation. And again I say unto you, Ye shall not cast anyone out of your sacrament meetings, who is earnestly seeking the kingdom; I speak this concerning those who are not of the church.

And again I say unto you, concerning your confirmation meetings, that if there be any that is not of the church, that is earnestly seeking after the kingdom, ye shall not cast them out; ***but ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally, and that which the Spirit testifies unto you, even so I would that you should do in all holiness of***

heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men, for some are of men, and others of devils.

Wherefore, beware, lest ye are deceived, and that ye may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given; for verily I say unto you, ***They are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do, that all may be benefited, that seeketh or that asketh of me,*** that asketh and not for a sign that he may consume it upon his lusts.” D&C 46:1-4

That Which They Desired Most

I had been asking God how we might do all things in holiness of heart before Him that we might receive the “best gifts” as directed in the above scripture, chiefly His Holy Spirit. And now I felt that, with this scripture, the Spirit was confirming that the elders should proceed with the order of events as indicated in D&C 17:18. The desire of my heart was simply that we might receive the promised gift as those of old had received it:

“And the twelve did teach the multitude, and behold, they did cause that the multitude should kneel down upon the face of the earth, and should pray unto the Father, in the name of Jesus. And the disciples did pray unto the Father also, in the name of Jesus. And it came to pass that they arose and ministered unto the people. And when they had ministered those same words which Jesus had spoken – **nothing varying** from the words which Jesus had spoken – behold, they knelt again, and prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus, ***and they did pray for that which they most desired; and they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them.***” III Nephi 9:7-10

On the Saturday before the baptismal service I shared some of this testimony briefly with one of my brethren who was scheduled to arrange the confirmation service the following weekend. At that time it was unclear to him if D&C 17:18 necessarily indicated a specific order, nor did he receive the same conviction that I did that we should follow that counsel I had been given through the prayer of faith.

I continued to be given a loving yet persistent assurance that I should pursue the matter with my brother, but I decided not to do so during the following week. However, I wrestled with my understandings pertaining to the sacrament and confirmation during that time and began to hope that I would be given some form of a second witness to verify what I had been taught. None came, nor did I actively pursue any outside of prayer. So I just tried to leave the whole matter in the Lord’s hands. But on the Friday before the confirmation service, as soon as I arrived home from work, I felt strongly moved upon to go over to the church and pray. I was directed to go into the library.

While I prayed at the church that Friday afternoon, I felt instructed by the Spirit of truth to take down Volume 1 of Church History. I was a bit impatient with the trial of my faith and rushed to look up references on confirmation. Finding none I quickly closed the book, feeling my faith was being stretched somewhat. Yet a gentle nudge of the Spirit caused me to look again. So I began to thumb through the pages. On page 61 I came across the following account partially describing how Joseph Smith testified that the Lord had instructed him to organize the church:

“...also we were commanded to bless bread and break it ***with them,*** and to take wine, bless it, and drink it ***with them,*** afterward, proceed <with the ordinations>...and then attend to the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost upon all those we had previously bap-

tized; doing all things in the name of the Lord.” (Emphasis added.)

Clearly they were instructed to partake of the bread and wine with those who had been baptized prior to confirming them by the laying on of hands.

Continuing on now with a bit more encouragement, on page 77 of Church History, Volume 1, I came across the account of the actual organization of the church on April 6, 1830. To my further encouragement, they obeyed these commandments as given. If I remember right, I muttered something like, “Then it is right, Lord.” I felt a pleasing smile, though I was somewhat embarrassed by my timid faith. Yet I had to see if it happened this way only because they were organizing the church or if they continued in this same way. Again, I found that the early church continued in the commandment of the Lord. On June 1 of that year at the first conference of the newly organized church, as recorded on page 87 of the same volume, the church again observed the sacrament prior to confirmations.

As I continued looking through Church History, my thoughts turned to Section 26 in which specific direction was given on how to prepare the emblems. Just then I came across the account on pages 116 and 117 where the account of when this revelation was given is found. Again, they partook first of the sacrament before they confirmed those who had been baptized. In response to their obedience, “The Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us; we praised the Lord God, and rejoiced exceedingly.” I was beginning to rejoice more and more as well with the same joy I had received when the Lord impressed upon me this order.

On pages 124 and 125 the order indicated in D&C 17:18 was again manifest in the church when there were those present to be confirmed. I knew I had my witness. And more impor-

tantly, the peace which I had had earlier, but which I had lost because I had resisted the Spirit, was now returning.

I brought my testimony to the priesthood who had gathered for fellowship the next morning on Saturday. After the deliberation of that day, the Lord blessed us with unity of spirit and we proceeded on Sunday, the next day, with the sacrament followed by the confirmations. What a joy! Our Lord Jesus Christ truly blessed us following the confirmations through the response of the people. Many stood and bore testimonies or prayers of thanksgiving. There were prophecies in moderation and an abundant measure of charity and peace. The Lord truly did bless our efforts to follow His Spirit into all truth (John 16:13-15). As someone once said, when God guides, He provides.

In the past year since these confirmations, we have had two other confirmation services in which the same order as spoken above was observed. During this time a number of questions have arisen. Is there a substantial scriptural precedent for this order? Should we always observe this pattern? The answer for me is not in the pattern as much as it was in the original desire to perform the ordinance in holiness before God and in a manner designed of Him so that He would be pleased to bless us more abundantly.

At the most recent service earlier this month, I again felt again by the pleasing invitation of the Spirit that it was appropriate to serve the sacrament to those who had been baptized of water prior to their confirmation. However, another elder was scheduled to lead the service. But praise be to God, the Lord provides.

On the Thursday just prior to the service, the elder who was scheduled to lead the service and I were scheduled to visit in the home of one those would be confirmed that Sunday. Thursday afternoon my wife, Pam, called me at work

to tell me that she had something that I would enjoy seeing when I came home. On coaxing her to give me a hint, she told me that in her preparation for the upcoming women's retreat, she had felt encouraged for several days to go to our basement and look through our old copies of the Saints' Herald. She finally had opportunity that morning to begin her search. As we have 18 volumes, she prayed over which one she should select and immediately chose the 1953 Herald.

As Pam looked through the Heralds, she came across an article entitled, *Serving the Communion Between Baptism and Confirmation*, by L. S. Rhodes on pages 10 through 12 of the September 7 issue. Finding this article on this day and in this way confirmed our faith that it truly would be pleasing to the Lord if the service were conducted with the sacrament prior to the confirmations. Later that night I was encouraged to pass a copy of the article on to my brother for his consideration; as of yet, however, I had not fully read it myself. I told him that this was simply a witness and not to prove anything. Though my children were all sick that Sunday and I could not attend the service, I was thankful in my heart that it was conducted in a manner designed by God. While some have had difficulty with this direction, I remain comforted by the Holy Spirit that this is His will. My hope is that in sharing these experiences it will help those who yet question the truthfulness of this leading. And so I write these things that all might choose for themselves:

“Behold, here is wisdom, and let every man choose for himself until I come. Even so. Amen.” Section 37:2b

Confirmation and The Testimony of Jesus Christ

“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you of Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched of

him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; *Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you;* so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; **who shall also confirm you unto the end**, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I Corinthians 1:4-8

The Greek word for “confirm” used here by the apostle Paul is also translated as “stabilitate” or “establish.” According to the dictionary, when something has been stabilized it has been given the strength to stand or endure. Enduring to the end is a requirement of salvation.

“And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this, that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he can not be saved.” II Nephi 13:2

The Lord has placed the ordinance of confirmation in His body to strengthen her members through the gift and power of the Holy Ghost so that those who have been baptized into the church might endure to the end (cf. D&C 17:8c). An article in the April edition of the *Zion's Outpost Branch Newsletter*, entitled “A Good Influence,” provides some helpful insight into this important aspect of the gospel. The author writes:

“It is unfortunate in this connection that the meaning of the word “comforter” has changed during the past three hundred years. We now tend to think of a comforter as one who soothes and reassures the downcast or bereaved. This is not quite accurate. There is good reason to believe that the original meaning was rather “one who comforts by making resolute and strong.” this is conveyed in the Greek term for the Comforter, *paraclete*, which means “the one called to stand by.” If we may fairly interpret the promise of Jesus in this way, then what he said to his friends was, in effect, that he would pray the Father to send them One who would stand by them forever,

to strengthen them and make them resolute to be their best possible selves, as he himself had always done.”

The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, is not just given to us to make us feel good. More importantly, He comes into the life which yields itself to Him to establish them forever upon the Rock of eternity. And so through confirmation, the Lord seeks to strengthen baptized members of His church through the Comforter so that they might endure to the end.

“I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.” John 14:18

In the above referenced scripture from I Corinthians 1, the apostle Paul identified for us a very specific purpose in confirmation: to confirm in us “the testimony of Christ” (I Corinthians 1:6). The testimony of Jesus Christ is the Spirit of prophecy, i.e. the Spirit of truth which will show us things to come (Revelations 19:10 & John 16:13,14). This is at the heart of the gospel message, as plainly shown in the following scripture:

“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.” Genesis 6:64-65

It is necessary to receive the testimony of Jesus Christ, not just a testimony of or about Christ. Those who do receive the living testimony of our Lord and are valiant in their testimony of Him will inherit celestial glory, if they abide the law of this kingdom (D&C 76:5b-d with 85:5b-6d).

“This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ, his Son.” Section 85:2a

The Comforter is not just given as a side benefit for those who believe in Jesus Christ. Without Him abiding in us we cannot stand against the storms of adversity we face in this life. For those who do not endure through prayer and faith, but are overcome, they will be taken captive by the Devil and cannot be saved (cf. D&C 76:3k-4b). The testimony of Jesus Christ is essential to our overcoming the enemy of all righteousness. For example, John, saw that those who overcame the “accuser of the brethren,” Satan, did so by the “blood of the Lamb, **and by the word of their testimony**” (Revelations 12:11). Without the stabilizing factor of the Spirit of prophecy in each of us we will not be able to overcome and endure to the end. Confirmation is an essential aspect of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must carefully consider how we administer this ordinance.

That We Might Always Have His Spirit To Be With Us

One of the most beautiful scriptural affirmations to me of the importance of partaking of the sacrament before confirmation is the prayers we have been given to offer up over the emblems. Consider for example the prayer over the bread:

“O God, the eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with

them. Amen.” Moroni 4:4

The ultimate objective we have in partaking of the Lord’s sacrament is to have His Spirit to always be with us. The Lord has shown us that if we love Him and keep His commandments He will grant us His Spirit:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. 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.” John 14:15-18

And so in the sacrament service we show our love for Him by remembering Him and the sacrifice He has made for us in laying down His life for our redemption and salvation. We are also witnessing that we are willing to keep all His commandments. Based upon our witness before God, Jesus confirms His Spirit upon His body. It is important that we remember that all we do in the sacrament service is for a witness before heaven. God remembers and His Anointed remembers. We must too.

How do these things specifically relate to confirmation? A key witness we make at the time we partake of the emblems is to show that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ. This means that we are willing to receive the testimony of Jesus Christ and to bear witness of Him before the world (cf. D&C 16:4e-g). For those who do witness before the world that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus promises to claim them as His own before the Father (Matthew 10:28). These are they in whom God dwells (I John 4:15). These are they who receive the Holy Ghost as an earnest of their inheritance (cf. Ephesians 1:13,14).

And I Will Pray the Father

We must never forget that we receive the Comforter through the prayer of Jesus Christ (John 14:15-27). As John the Baptist testified, Jesus was the one who was sent of God to baptize with fire and the Holy Ghost (Mark 1:6). Those having faith will receive this most precious gift (cf. D&C 32:3c). When? The New Testament apostles did not receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost John spoke of until Pentecost (Acts 1:5). This was after Jesus had already instituted the sacrament in the church before His death on the cross.

In the Book Mormon the doctrine which the followers of Christ observed is described very beautifully in II Nephi chapters 13 and 14. Nephi taught that there would not be any additional doctrine given until the time that Jesus Christ manifest Himself in the flesh among His people² (II Nephi 14:7). At that time when He did manifest Himself, Jesus instituted the sacrament before granting His twelve disciples power to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost (III Nephi 8:28-71 & Moroni 2). They received this precious gift because it was “that which they desired most” (III Nephi 9:10). Of truth God grants us that which we desire most (Alma 15:55,56).

How and when Jesus Christ bestows the Holy Ghost is not always consistent in circumstance to our viewpoint. For example, in teaching Peter that the gospel was for the “unclean” Gentiles as well as the Jews, the Lord poured out His Spirit upon Cornelius “and his company” as he preached before they were even baptized (Acts 10:44-48). Of truth, we must confess that this is His work and not our own (D&C 22:23 & John 5:17). Also consider the Lamanites who received the Holy Ghost and did not even know it (III Nephi 4:49,50). So what must we do to be baptized from above? Like Cornelius and company we must fear God and work righteousness. And like the Lamanites we are to of-

fer to Jesus Christ the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Simply, our work is to believe on Jesus Christ and become meek and submissive to the leading of His Spirit of truth (John 6:28,29 & 14:10-12).

Nothing Varying

In summary, our Lord has given us a pattern in performing the ordinances. The elders are to lead the services as they are led of the Holy Ghost. To prepare themselves they must seek the best gifts for those to whom they are called to minister to as servants (D&C 17:8 & 46:1-4).

“And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. 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.” Section 83:3b-c

If the church respect those called to this ministry they will receive the blessings so ordained for their benefit and blessing. But if they do not they deprive themselves of those blessings which come from on high:

“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.” D&C 125:14c

God is a God of order, He is not a God of confusion. If we will prepare a house of order (D&C 85:36), and not vary from what our Lord Jesus Christ has taught, we too will reap the benefits of the same as those of old did truly receive (III Nephi 9:7-14).

I believe very strongly that God’s priesthood,

particularly the elders, are to be taught from on high as spoken of in scripture (D&C 43:4c). This was my hope in this matter, and I truly can say that the Lord richly rewards the believing heart if our intent is to please Him (cf. Hebrews 11:6):

“But he that believeth these things which I have spoken, him will I visit with the manifestations of my Spirit; and he shall know and bear record. For because of my Spirit, he shall know that these things are true for it persuadeth men to do good; and whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good, is of me; for good cometh of none, save it be of me.” Ether 1:105

The Just Shall Live by Faith

This testimony is not meant to argue a point. Rather it is to testify of the workings of the Holy Spirit in my life in this matter. That this is the Lord’s doing is my faith. And I feel that the Lord has extended an invitation to us for a greater outpouring of His Spirit upon us. If we reject these things, we hinder, if not block, His blessings. Notwithstanding our wandering ways, however, the apostle Paul assures us that our God, is able to do above and beyond what we think or ask (Ephesians 3:20). And so we do well to entrust these matters into His hands through faith so that He, as the Head of the body, is able to conduct the affairs of the church in a manner designed of God. As Jesus Christ has said, “This is my gospel...and they shall have faith in me, or they can in nowise be saved” (D&C 32:3a).

It is incumbent upon us to remember that it is through disobedience and the traditions of our fathers (i.e. elders) that light and truth is stolen from among us.

“And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition

of their fathers.” D&C 90:6c

Light and truth has been and continues to be lost through these two ways. For example, the Pharisees of old accused Jesus’ disciples of transgressing the tradition of the elders when they did not wash (Matthew 15:2). In response, Jesus said:

“...**ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.** O ye hypocrites! well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching the doctrines and the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:7

This can happen to any of us when we resort to tradition. The Holy Ghost is the power of Godliness (cf. John 1:12, 3:28). Therefore, we must be careful not to have a form of godliness which denies the power thereof (II Timothy 3:5, D&C 83:3c). We are called to live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. In other words, we are to live and to walk by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

“And now I give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life; for you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit; and everyone that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit, cometh unto God, even the Father; and the Father teacheth him of the covenant which he has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for your sakes only, but for the sake of the whole world.”

D&C 83:7a-e

By setting our eyes single to the glory of God so that we might receive light and truth, i.e. the Spirit of truth (D&C 83:7), we become sanctified by being filled with the light for Jesus Christ before the world (D&C 85:17,18 & Matthew 5:16):

“...that which is of God is light, and he that receiveth light and continueth in God, receiveth more light, and that light groweth brighter and brighter, until the perfect day.” D&C 50:6b

To grow brighter in the light of truth, we must come to Jesus Christ, the One who is meek and lowly in heart, and learn of His ways (cf. Matthew 11:29,30). Unless we humble ourselves before Him and become meek as a child He will resist us and our requests for a blessing.

The desire for holiness is at the heart of all of God’s blessings, both His desire for our holiness and also our desire to be holy as He is holy (cf. I Peter 1:15,16). For what other purpose could the Holy Ghost possibly be given, except that we should become holy like unto our God?

“What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” I Corinthians 6:19

Those who hunger after righteousness will not be turned away, for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is gracious to bless the meek and lowly in heart (Matthew 5:2-18). For unless they are meek and lowly they are not acceptable to Him (Ether 5:27 & Moroni 7:49).

¹ Note: According to D&C 17:18 a person is considered a member of the church who has been baptized in water but who has not as yet been confirmed. In other words, confirmation is for “those who are baptized *into* the church”

(D&C 17:8c), i.e. confirmation does not make someone a member but rather “confirms” or strengthens them as a member of the body. The word “*into*” in the above quote could be considered to be the result of confirmation, but please note that “into” follows the word “baptized” and should be associated with it in agreement with the teaching of verse 18. Remember, repentance and baptism, together, are the gate by which we enter into the Way (II Nephi 6:82-84 & 13:24). I believe that this is why Alma asked if his brethren of the church had been born of God (Alma 3:27-32). Some evidently had not as yet received the Holy Ghost. His preaching indicates, however, that blessings were withheld from because of their hard hearts and ignorance of the gospel principles. It was not the lack of an ordinance, as was the case once in the New Testament church (cf. Alma 3:33-108 with Acts 8:14-17). Unless a person is humbled through repentance, they will not be permitted to enter into the narrow way even if they participate in the ordinances (II Nephi 6:80-84, D&C 3:16,17 & D&C 55:1d). For none is acceptable to the Lord except the meek and lowly in heart (Moroni 7:49). We must become as little children before Him, being submissive to His will (III Nephi 5:39,40 & Mosiah 1:120). One should never procrastinate this commandment which is kept through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ (Alma 16:229-238 & Moroni 8:29).

² Up to the time of Christ, they were under the Mosaic Law (cf. II Nephi 11:44-48). When Jesus Christ came to manifest Himself unto them, they came under the New Covenant (cf. Hebrews, chapters 8-10).