

## “THE FIRST PRINCIPLES AND ORDINANCES OF THE GOSPEL”

### THE ARTICLES OF FAITH OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by **obedience to the laws and ordinances** of the Gospel.

4. We believe that **the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel** are: first, **Faith** in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, **Repentance**; third, **Baptism** by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The first principles spell out our journey to being at-one again with God. It is the process through which we can make the atonement fully operative in our lives. This reconciliation with God is at the heart of the gospel.

**President David O. McKay:** “It is inconceivable to think that anyone can even question the essentiality of repentance and baptism. **Every principle of the gospel when studied carefully reveals a harmony with truth** that is simply sublime. Each seems to be all comprehensive, either leading into or embracing other principles thus, faith in a perfect being, inspiring one to live righteously, seems to include repentance. So forgiveness may encompass charity; charity, love; and so on. **This harmony, or rather this oneness of all fundamental principles of the gospel** is indicative of their being elements of eternal truth,” (*Gospel Ideals*, 12).

**Elder Neal A. Maxwell:** “When we come to be **genuinely concerned with pleasing God**—more than with pleasing any in the world, even ourselves—**then our behavior improves and His blessings can engulf us**. This sublime feeling can be experienced only **if we come to know enough about Him** so that our awe melts into adoration, and our respect into utter reverence.

“We cannot make such deep commitments to Him or have such deep experiences at His hand *without accepting and pondering the simple doctrines* that lie at the center of it all. The basic doctrines are lofty, but they are not abstract; they actually knit together daily life and eternity.” (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, 2).

**The Prophet Joseph Smith:** “When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top, and so it is with **the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation**. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn out salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 348).

**2 Nephi 25: 23** For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.

### 1. FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF THE GOSPEL

*Strengthening our faith in Christ is a constant challenge. We strengthen our faith gradually, not in one special experience, and then we must nourish it to keep it strong.*

**D&C 19:23** Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have **peace** in me.

**Alma 32:27** But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and **exercise a particle of faith**, yea, even if ye can no more **than desire to believe**, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.

**D&C 20:69** 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 8:10** Remember that **without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith**. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not.

**D&C 63:9** But, behold, **faith cometh not by signs**, but signs follow those that believe.

**10** Yea, signs come by faith, not by the will of men, nor as they please, but by the will of God.

**11** Yea, **signs come by faith**, unto mighty works, for **without faith no man pleaseth God**; and with whom God is angry he is not well pleased; wherefore, unto such he showeth no signs, only in wrath unto their condemnation.

**Moroni 7:33** Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me.

## 2. SINCERE REPENTANCE BRINGS BLESSINGS OF THE ATONEMENT

*When we have faith in Christ, we are empowered to repentance. We understand that there is a way of life that is not guile-laden and full of self-recriminations but instead full of seeking to learn and see things as God does.*

**D&C 58:42** Behold, he who **has repented** of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.  
**43** By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, **he will confess them and forsake them.**

**D&C 61:** Thus saith the Lord unto you, O ye elders of my church, who are assembled upon this spot, whose sins are now forgiven you, for I, the Lord, **forgive sins**, and am **merciful** unto those who confess their sins with **humble hearts.**

**D&C 18:11** For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

**12** And he hath risen again from the dead, **that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance.**

**13** And how great is his joy in the soul that **repenteth!**

**D&C 19: 16** For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, **that they might not suffer if they would repent;**

**17** But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

**18** Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

**2 Nephi 2:6** Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

**7** 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.

**D&C 1:31** For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

**32** Nevertheless, **he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;**

**33** And he that **repents not**, from him **shall be taken even the light which he has received**; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of Hosts.

**D&C 29: 17** And it shall come to pass, because of the wickedness of the world, that I will take vengeance upon the wicked, for **they will not repent**; for the cup of mine indignation is full; for behold, **my blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not.**

## 3. BAPTISM IS AN ESSENTIAL ORDINANCE

*Baptism is not only a cleansing but an entering into a new life, symbolized by our being completely buried in the water so that the natural man in us may die and we may be reborn in Christ. Each week as we partake of the sacrament, we are again partaking in the cleansing power of the atonement as we take upon ourselves Christ's holy name*

**Alma 7:14** Now I say unto you that **ye must repent, and be born again**; for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness.

**15** I say unto you come and **fear not**, and **lay aside every sin**, which easily doth beset you, which doth bind you down to destruction, yea, come and go forth, and show unto your God that ye are willing to repent of your sins and enter into a covenant with him to keep his commandments, and witness it unto him this day by going into the waters of baptism.

**2 Nephi 31:10** And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, **can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?**

**11** And the Father said: **Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized** in the name of my Beloved Son.

**12** And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; **wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do.**

**13** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, **with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting** of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism -- yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.

**D&C 20:37** *And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism*—All those who **humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized**, and come forth with **broken hearts and contrite spirits**, and witness before the church that they have truly **repented** of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the **name of Jesus Christ**, having a determination to **serve** him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received **by baptism** into his church.

#### 4. THROUGH CONFIRMATION, WE RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

*The gift of the Holy Ghost is given to us that we might be strengthened and guided to fulfill what we intend through our faith and repentance—that is to live in such a way that the atonement is upon us.*

**TEACHER: D&C 18:18** Ask the Father in my name, in faith **believing** that you shall receive, and you shall have the Holy Ghost, which manifesteth all things which are expedient unto the children of men.

**D&C 39:6** And this is my gospel—repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, **even the Comforter, which showeth all things, and teacheth the peaceable things of the kingdom.**

**D&C 79:2** And I will send upon him **the Comforter, which shall teach him the truth** and the way whither he shall go;

**1 Nephi 10:19** For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.

**COMFORTER: John 14:26** But 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.

**TESTIFIER: D&C 42: 17** Behold, **the Comforter knoweth all things**, and beareth record of the Father and of the Son.

**John 15: 26** But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, **he shall testify of me:**

**LEADS US TO DO GOOD: D&C 11: 13** Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I will impart unto you of my Spirit**, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

**14** And then **shall ye know**, or by this shall you know, **all things whatsoever you desire of me**, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive.

**ENLIGHTENS OUR MINDS: D&C 76: 10** For **by my Spirit will I enlighten them**, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.

**SANCTIFIED THROUGH HIM: 3 Nephi 27: 20** Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, **that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost**, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

**INSPIRES US: D&C 31: 11** Go your way whithersoever I will, **and it shall be given you by the Comforter what you shall do and whither you shall go.**

**D&C 75:27** Let them ask and they shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto them, and **be made known from on high, even by the Comforter**, whither they shall go.

#### 5. ENDURE TO THE END IN FAITH TO RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE

**D&C 24:8** Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee even unto the end of thy days.

**D&C 14: 7** And, **if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.**