

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS & CHURCH HISTORY GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

* GREEN MOUNTAIN 1ST WARD * LAKEWOOD, COLORADO * 03/22/09 * PAGE 1 *

Lesson 11: “The Field Is White Already to Harvest” (D&C 4; 11–12; 14–18; 31; 33; 75; *Our Heritage*, p.11)

Introduction

Samuel Smith



Phineas Young



John P. Greene



{ _____ }

Once the gospel was restored, the Church began a tremendous missionary effort to spread these glad tidings throughout the world. Many new converts responded with zeal to missionary calls. One of these converts was Joseph Smith’s brother Samuel.

In April 1830, Samuel Smith began traveling to neighboring towns in New York to preach the gospel and introduce people to the Book of Mormon. He had little success, though he did sell a copy of the book to a man named Phinehas Young. In June 1830, Samuel was set apart by the Prophet Joseph to take a missionary journey to the east. He walked 25 miles the first day and stopped at many houses, but the people treated him unkindly and would not listen. The next day he left a copy of the Book of Mormon with John P. Greene, a Methodist minister. John Greene’s wife, Rhoda, was Phinehas Young’s sister.

Facing rejection from almost everyone he contacted, Samuel felt that his mission had not been very successful. However, the books he left with Phinehas Young and John P. Greene led to their conversion and the conversion of many others. For example, Phinehas Young and Rhoda Greene had a brother named Brigham, who was converted and later became the second President of the Church. Brigham Young’s friend Heber C. Kimball also joined the Church. He later served in the First Presidency. Both Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball were instrumental in the conversion of thousands in the United States and England.

If you were to fill in the blank above with the names of all the people who have been influenced by Samuel Smith’s missionary work, you would have to write millions of names. Those directly influenced included some of the great leaders of the Church. Many of us, if not all of us, have in some way been touched by this service.

This lesson discusses some of the key revelations the Lord has given concerning service in His kingdom, particularly in sharing the gospel. Just as Samuel Smith’s missionary efforts have blessed many generations of Church members, when we share the gospel there is potential to bless many people now and hundreds or even thousands in the future.

In February 1829, Joseph Smith’s parents came to visit Joseph and Emma in Harmony, Pennsylvania. During this time, the Prophet inquired of the Lord and received the revelation recorded in **D&C 4** for his father, Joseph Smith Sr.

In addition to this revelation for his father, the Prophet received revelations for many others who asked him to inquire of the Lord and learn of His will for them. Some of these revelations are recorded in **D&C 11, 12, 14, 15, and 16**. Although these revelations were given for individuals, the principles pertain to all who serve in the Lord’s kingdom (D&C 11:27).



Statue of Samuel Smith at the MTC in Provo, Utah.

Lesson Highlights

- “Serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength.”
- Prepare to serve the Lord.
- “The field is white.”
- “Open your mouths and they shall be filled.”
- The Lord promises great blessings to those who labor in His service.

A study of this lesson will help us resolve to strengthen the kingdom of God through diligent service, particularly by sharing the gospel through missionary work.

Next Week

#12 “The Gathering of My People” (See Study Guide)

“Serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength.”

D&C 4:1-2 includes requirements for those who serve in the Lord’s kingdom. This suggests total dedication to His service. To realize what it means to be totally committed, we should understand why we are sometimes less than fully committed, and then consider carefully how we can improve our commitment to serve with devotion.

Joseph Smith, Sr. devoted his life to serving the Lord, as this account shows: *“Joseph Smith, Sr., was filled with the testimony of the truth, and was always anxious to share it with others. He was almost sixty when he made the tedious journey...to carry the gospel to his father and mother, his sisters and brothers.*

Prepare to serve the Lord.

Throughout the D&C, the Lord counsels us in how to prepare ourselves to serve him. Some of the attributes he desires us to have include:

- **D&C 4:3; 11:8** - Desire is necessary to be called
- **D&C 4:5-6; 12:8; 18:19** - We need to have faith, hope, charity, love, singleness of purpose, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, humility, and diligence.

“The field is white.”

Throughout the D&C, the Lord communicates a sense of urgency about spreading the gospel message. This is because the purpose of the work is that stated in D&C 100:4—*“the salvation of souls.”*

D&C 4:4; 11:3; and 33:3 compare missionary work to a field that is ready for harvesting. Why is this an appropriate analogy?

The Lord warned the elders not to be idle or bury their talents and said that they should *“go forth”* rather than *“tarry”*. (D&C 60:13; 75:3)



The Field is White, Already to Harvest
– Enrique Manuel Garcia

“Soon after his return [home,] he was imprisoned for a small debt of fourteen dollars, rather than deny the divinity of the Book of Mormon and be forgiven the debt! He was cast into a cell with a condemned murderer and left for four days without food. Later he was transferred to the prison workyard where he preached the gospel and converted two persons whom he later baptized. He was in prison a full month before his family was able to obtain his release”. (E. Cecil McGavin, *The Family of Joseph Smith* [1963], 68)

It would be well for us to follow his example of devoted service.

- **D&C 11:6, 20** – Obedience is essential. Seek to advance the work and keep the commandments faithfully and fully.
 - **D&C 4:7; 31:12** – Prayer (asking) helps us in serving the Lord and avoiding temptation.
- We should select one of these attributes and prayerfully strive to improve it.
- **D&C 11:21** – We can have the power of God unto the convincing of men, but before we declare the word, we must seek to obtain it.

Elder Henry B. Eyring related the following experience: *“It’s easy to say ‘The time isn’t right.’ But there is a danger in procrastination. Years ago I worked for a man in California. He hired me; he was kind to me; he seemed to regard me highly. I may have been the only Latter-day Saint he ever knew well. I don’t know all the reasons I found to wait for a better moment to talk to him about the gospel. I just remember my feeling of sorrow when I learned, after he had retired and I lived far away, that he and his wife had been killed in a late-night drive to their home in Carmel, California. He loved his wife. He loved his children. He had loved his parents. He loved his grandchildren, and he will love their children and will want to be with them forever. Now I don’t know how the crowds will be handled in the world to come. But I suppose that I will meet him, that he will look into my eyes, and that I will see in them the question, ‘Hal, you knew. Why didn’t you tell me?’”* (Ensign, Nov. 1998, 33)

“These revelations in the Doctrine & Covenants came to a world where only a handful of individuals knew the gospel. It was beginning from the valiancy of these few that the gospel has spread today.

Wilford Woodruff described the power that moved him when he was called on a mission, “The Spirit of God was upon me like fire shut up in my bones, urging me forward to fill my mission to England.” It certainly took that kind of fire to light testimonies across the world.”

Maurine Jensen
Proctor
(<http://www.meridianmagazine.com/gospeldoctrine/dc/050301dc11.html>)



“Open your mouths and they shall be filled.”

In the D&C, the Lord gives direction on *what* we should teach and *how* we should teach as we share the gospel. He also encourages us to speak without fear and he will help us when we feel inadequate.

- **D&C 11:9; 15:6; 18:6; 31:3-4; 33:10-11; 42:12, and 52:8-9** provide us with what to teach including repentance and baptism, modern-day revelations, principles in the Book of Mormon and Bible, and things as prompted by the Spirit.
- **D&C 18:20-21; 38:41; 42:6, 14; and 100:7-8** tell us how to teach—speak the truth in meekness and mildness, with the voice of a trumpet, and do not teach unless you have the Spirit with you. One important principle is to avoid contention when we preach and teach the gospel. We need to be both bold and meek as missionaries.

The Lord promises great blessings to those who labor in His service.

- **D&C 4:4; 11:3; 75:5** remind us of the blessings of laboring diligently in the Lord’s service including everlasting salvation, a crown of honor and glory, immortality, and eternal life.
 - **D&C 18:15-16** remind us that we will have great joy with those we bring into the Church.
 - **D&C 31:5; 84:60-61**—our sins shall be forgiven and our families will be blessed.
 - **D&C 31:7; 109:55-57**—People’s hearts will be opened including those of royalty as well as the poor as we spread the gospel all over the world.
 - **D&C 31:11; 84:85; 100:5-6.** We will be given inspiration as we need it if we will treasure up the word of the Lord in advance.
- **D&C 30:11; 30:5; 33:8-11; 60:2; 19:38; 33:12-14.** The Lord repeatedly exhorted elders not to “fear man” because He is with us. We must open our mouths as prompted or the Lord will be angry with us.
 - **D&C 11:21; 14:8; 31:3.** If we are concerned about lack of ability in teaching or speaking, the Lord can help us overcome those fears if we will obtain His word, pray in faith, and ponder upon the things we are inspired with by the Spirit.
 - Samuel Smith may have felt that his first mission was a failure, but it was a true success when the later results became known. His placement of books with Phineas Young and John P. Greene was a tremendously important event. Think about what we can learn from such experiences about missionary work.
 - **D&C 31:13; 75:9-13; 84:88** teach that we have the blessing of the Lord being with us—around us and going before us, and the Spirit will be in our hearts
 - **D&C 71:9-10** teach that no weapon shall prosper against us and our critics will be confounded.
 - **D&C 84:80** promises that we shall be strengthened, not be weary, the Lord will watch over us continually, and we shall not be hungry or thirsty (temporal needs will be met).
 - **D&C 100:7-8** contains the Lord’s promise that the Holy Ghost will bear witness of what we say.

Conclusion

Endeavor to give full devotion to serving the Lord. The Lord will bless us as we share the gospel with others.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- How have you shown your commitment to serve the Lord with full devotion? How can you improve your effort?
- How has prayer helped you in serving the Lord?
- What have you done to fulfill your obligation to spread the gospel?

