

D&C Lesson # 10
This Is My Voice unto All
(D&C 23-25)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. As the Lord continued to build His Church, He prepared many for leadership roles.

A. Their first responsibility was to proclaim the Gospel.

1. He counseled Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel Smith, Joseph Smith, Sr.; Joseph Knight, Sr. to **beware of pride and to proclaim truth from the scriptures** (D&C 23).

2. He counseled Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to open their mouths and to declare His gospel as with a trumpet (D&C 24).

II. **He also prepared women**, and He gave special counsel to Emma Smith.

A. Emma was told her first calling was to “be a comfort unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., in his afflictions with consoling words, in the spirit of meekness” (D&C 25:5).

1. Joseph had been warned, “Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee” (D&C 24:8). Joseph did indeed bear great and heavy burdens.

B. While the Lord remained with and comforted Joseph, He also gave him a loving and affectionate wife, and helped her understand being a comfort to him was her first responsibility.

C. This was not to make her subservient. She was called to be her **natural, comforting half of their “One.”** But in doing such for Joseph, she took upon herself much of his great burden.

1. When we study the life of Emma, we should be moved by all she sacrificed for the sake of the Gospel.

III. Emma would have other important roles.

A. When Emma is referred to as an “elect woman,” it means that she was sent to the earth with special callings to perform, just as men are foreordained for certain work.

B. Emma was commanded to “expound scriptures,” and apparently she did so as President of the Relief Society in which capacity she later served.

C. The Lord’s counsel to her and others to study the scriptures was likely one way He was **helping prepare for the onslaught against the scriptures which would soon come upon the earth.**

1. While those of her day were generally believers in the scriptures, the “Higher Criticism” which began to attack the origins and validity of the scriptures came to the shores of America soon thereafter, as well as Darwin’s theories of evolution.

2. These movements have done much to undermine the faith of many that the scriptures truly come from the Lord, **which includes His standards of morality.** Even today we feel the consequences of people’s loss of faith in the Bible, especially as they no longer feel the Bible’s teachings regarding morality are applicable.

3. The issuance of the Book of Mormon was **another effort to validate the overall truthfulness of the Bible, for it taught that if we believe the one we will believe the other** (Mormon 7:8-9)

IV. While giving specific instructions to certain individuals, the Lord makes it clear it often contains “His Voice to all.” He does so in His instructions to Emma (D&C 25:16).

A. So, our modern prophets confirm that all Latter-day Saint women are encouraged, like Emma and the brethren, to become scribes.

B. Presidents Ezra Taft Benson, Spencer W. Kimball and President Thomas S. Monson all said women of the Church should become scribes. President Spencer W. Kimball said to the young women on July, 1980, “We say to you, as we recently said to the adult sisters in the Church, that the Lord is delighted when we have sisters in the Church who are good scribes” (“Here and Now, Then and There”).

C. The Visiting Teaching message of March 20, 2010 carried President Monson’s emphasis: “We want our sisters to be scholars of the scriptures. . . . You need an acquaintanceship with his eternal truths for your own wellbeing, and for the purposes of teaching your own children and all others who come within your influence.”

D. Including the warnings of pride along with his exhortation, President Kimball said the purposes of becoming a scribe was “not to put others down, but to lift them up!”

E. Neal Maxwell even said that what the Church needed was more women scribes and more men who did the kind of ministering women usually do.

F. Since that counsel it would appear that many women have indeed sought to understand the scriptures to a higher degree and in doing so have contributed much to the wellbeing of themselves, their families, and the Church.

G. I am personally grateful we are told by the Lord that though giving specific counsel to some He often means, “This is my voice unto all.” For often I have found strength and comfort in the scriptures from the counsel given to others.

V. Emma was also counseled to receive the Holy Ghost, and that “thy time shall be given to writing and to learning much” (D&C 25:8).

A. Today the brethren still counsel women, and all others, to use their knowledge of the scriptures to share the Gospel in any way that we can, especially online.

B. For women who have children still at home, this is one way they can use scriptural knowledge and still be true to their first responsibilities as wives and mothers.

VI. Emma’s special calling to prepare a set of hymns for the Church has proved to be a great blessing to the Church which should not be overlooked or minimized (D&C 25:11).

A. The Lord gave one reason why this was important: “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me” (D&C 25:12).

B. Another major purpose, however, is that through our hymns our souls can be touched.

1. President Boyd K. Packer often taught that we should use our hymns to help us push aside temptations and negative thoughts.

C. But it also gives us strength to overcome challenges.

1. Keith Hamilton, a black convert from North Carolina, tells in his autobiography, *Last Laborer, Thoughts and Reflections of a Black Mormon*, that when he attended his first Mormon meeting, the hymns seemed slow and the people unenthusiastic in their singing.

1. This was in contrast to what he had experienced in the black churches where the singing is often rousing, with clapping of hands, rocking of the choir, etc.

2. However, as he recounted the challenges of being a lone black man in the Church where he lived, and yet his growing testimony, he often began and ended with quotations from inspired music in the Church. He found that in the end, the music within the Church has had a profound effect upon his testimony and his ability to overcome challenges. He gave many examples.

3. In the concluding chapters, he quotes from “Come, Come Ye Saints.” And in giving encouragement to other black members, he quotes the words of “My Savior’s Love,” using its words to equate the experiences of all faithful people in overcoming their challenges.

D. The importance of music within the Church cannot be minimized. While we sing our current hymns as praise to God, they also comfort us, encourage us, strengthen us, and enlighten us in our quiet moments alone. They are a great strength to us in facing temptation. **Preparing such a collection was indeed a special and important calling given Emma.**

VII. The Lord continually gave warnings to avoid pride.

A. This included Emma, but also many others (D&C 25:14; D&C 23:1; 42:40, etc.).

B. Pride was the main cause for the destruction of all previous groups who possessed Christ’s Gospel, [Ancient Israel, the Gentiles who inherited Christ’s Gospel, the Jaredites and the Nephites], so it is very pertinent to us in our day as well.

C. In fact, all the prophets who saw our days, both in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, saw that **pride would be a great factor in the wickedness of our time.**

1. **All those things which cause the arousal of pride are more prevalent in our days.**

We have **greater knowledge**, which often leads to pride.

We have **greater riches**, one of the **chief sources of pride**. [Many of those who consider themselves “poor” in our day, have things even previous kings did not have: telephones; T.V.s; computers; central heating; automobiles and smooth highways to drive them on.]

VIII. The Lord gave Emma [and us] a great key to avoiding pride when He says, “Thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better.” If our hearts are truly on the things of Heaven and especially **upon the glory of God**, we are less likely to feel pride.

A. One act of pride which we Latter-day Saints need to recognize is “Judging.” Judging others is often a weakness of even good church members. But the Lord repeatedly warned about it, and He told us why. **“For it is high to be a judge.” That indicates that to judge another is to lift ourselves up above them, which is pride.**

B. President Ezra Taft Benson gave masterful talks about pride to which we should hearken.

C. Elder Neal Maxwell wrote a book on its opposite --- meekness (*Meek and Lowly*, Deseret Book 1987)

1. He showed that to seek to be meek is to go against the headwinds of modernity, who value aggressiveness instead. Nevertheless, **meekness is what the Lord still values most highly.**

D. Elder Maxwell warned, “Granted, meek individuals are apt to have periodic public relations problems, being misrepresented and misunderstood. They will have to ‘take it’ at times” (p. 5).

But he indicated such times can become learning [and blessing] experiences.

E. The Lord had already counseled “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me” (D&C 19:23). So if we follow this counsel and live our lives continually influenced by His Spirit, we will automatically walk in meekness due to His Spirit. And we will find peace in spite of anything we face --- through Him.

It is marvelous that the Lord spoke to his servants in such personal ways in the early days of the Church. He was also sending that same counsel to saints in our time. We should not be bored when the counsel given is repetitive. That indicates these principles are of highest importance. And we should hearken to His Voice in these matters above all.