

Making Your Calling and Election Sure
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What I'd like to do if I might properly be guided by the spirit, and I devoutly hope and pray that such may be the case, for me and for all of you likewise, what I'd like to do is express some views and concepts relative to the doctrine of making our calling and election sure.

Now this sounds like a hard and a difficult subject. I surmise that it's one that's not fully known or understood everywhere at least. But actually, as far as the fundamental and basic concepts are concerned, this is a very basic and a very easy thing. There isn't anything complex or mysterious or unknown. It's something that we ought to understand, at least in so far as we are privileged and find it appropriate to talk about it. And it's a doctrine out of which some determinations ought to grow in our hearts to do certain things in this life so that having had the peace and satisfaction that goes with the gospel here, and we can end up reaping the eternal rewards that are promised the faithful in the realms ahead.

And so now if I may be properly guided, and your hearts also may be enlightened by the same spirit, I think I'll take the first chapter of the second epistle of Peter as a text and try and bring before you some of the basic and fundamental concepts that are involved in this glorious doctrine. It happens to be one that the prophet Joseph Smith made frequent reference to, particularly during the latter years of his ministry. And so I read, "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us," these words thus are addressed to the saints, they're addressed to the members of the church, they're addressed to people who understand and know the doctrines of salvation. "Who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord." So we're starting out on the premise that this doctrine is based on a concept that is true and correct of God. God and his laws and the saving power that is in Christ. According as his, that is Christ's, divine power hath given unto us, all things that pertain unto life and godliness. This is a summation doctrine. This is a crowning doctrine. This is the thing that leads to life, meaning eternal life, and which involves all phases of godliness. Through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. We are called to something. We'll try and determine what our calling is, in order to specify what it means to make that calling absolute and sure. Whereby are given unto us, exceeding great and precious promises. That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature. And if someone's a partaker of the divine nature, he becomes like God. He receives, inherits and possesses the characters and perfections and attributes that deity has. Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. We've forsaken the world and we've come into the kingdom of God and now have the aim and the goal to make that calling that has been ours, sure. To get the blessings and benefits that flow from it. And so we get this council, and beside this, giving all diligence, addressed to members of the church, add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity. So a number of the attributes of godliness that we seek are noted and we're exhorted to obtain them. For if these things be in you, that is after you join the church if you pursue a course that causes you to acquire the attributes of godliness, those listed and related ones acquire them in measurable degree, if these things be in you, AND ABOUND, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And of course it's life eternal to know God and Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind. We think sometimes in the church that we know a very great deal or

ought to, because of some intellectual standing or otherwise. But what Peter is saying here is, that people are blind even in the church, unless they have acquired the attributes of godliness. And so, the more of these perfected attributes that people possess, the more accurate and proper their views are on spiritual things, and the less blindness exists in their lives.

Ye are blind and cannot see afar off and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Purged of course through baptism. Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. For if these things, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so, that is in doing these things, an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly. Into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now an abundant entrance has obvious reference to exhalation in the highest heaven in the celestial world. Now Peter having summarized and outlined the doctrine to that extent, then gives the testimony and witness as to what occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration. How Christ was transfigured before them, how the voice of God was heard, and he rejoices in the privilege that had there come to him along with James and John. And having so said, that this voice came from Heaven, and that they heard it, when they were with Christ in the holy mount. Then he says this, "We have also, (now this is something in addition to standing on the mount, and hearing the voice of God and seeing the Lord Jesus transfigured before them), we have also, a more sure word of prophesy, (and indicates that this is a great things in their lives). Now, the prophet writing in considering by the spirit of inspiration, picked up that thing that Peter said and gave this definition: The more sure word of prophesy, means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophesy through the power of the holy priesthood.

Well let's talk about some very basic and fundamental things and there the cornerstones, the foundation on which this great doctrine rests. To begin with, there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal, an everlasting, glorified, exalted being. He has a tabernacle of flesh and bones. He's a resurrected and holy and perfected man, and we are his offspring. We are his spirit children. He lives in the family unit. We're members of his family. We lived in this pre-mortal life with him for an infinite period of time, in which we were on probation and we were being schooled and tested and examined, given the laws and the circumstances so that we could progress and advance. And what he did for us was ordain a plan of salvation. The plan originated with the Father. It's God's gospel. Christ became its chief advocate and supporter but God ordained the plan. Now this plan was to enable his spirit children to grow from their primitive, primeval, spirit state, to a state of glory and dignity and exaltation so that they would be like him, like the Father. Now the name of the kind of life that God the Father lives, is eternal life. That describes wholly and completely the state in which he lives and it includes having power and dominion, might and glory and omnipotence and also it includes living in the family relationship. In his instance, we being his spirit offspring. Well this plan was ordained. This system was given to us. And for what to us is an infinite period of time, we advanced and progressed and did things that enabled us to go along the course leading to exaltation and dominion and godhood. The whole system and philosophy of true and revealed religion consists in progressing toward exaltation. Well, in this prior life, this pre-mortal existence, this preexistence, we developed various capacities and talents. Some developed them in one field and some developed them in another. The most important of all fields was the field of spirituality. The ability, the talent, the capacity to recognize truth. And those segregated out from among the whole hosts of men, the hosts of all the spirit offspring of God, who had the greatest spiritual talents, got themselves in a state and a condition where they were FOREORDAINED to receive certain blessings, when in due course they came down into mortality. Now we're quite well aware that Joseph Smith and Jeremiah, and the apostles and prophets, the wise the great and the good were for-ordained to particular ministries. But that really is a very insignificant or partial part of the doctrine of foreordination. The great and glorious thing about foreordination is, that the whole house of Israel was foreordained. That millions upon millions, comparatively few compared to the total hosts, but millions of people, were foreordained to get certain gospel blessings in this life. Now it's our habit and its our

custom to talk about foreordination. And this is not difficult for us to understand. But, but in the day of Peter and Paul and these ancient brethren, they were faced with a little different social circumstance, and a little bit different educational climate. And so although they did talk about foreordination to some extent, primarily, they talked about being called and elected. They talked about callings and elections. About elections that came that make people members of the house of Israel. Now for instance, without us reading the revelations to find them, let's just summarize. Paul taught and said, that people in this life were CALLED to be holy without spot and blameless. He said that people in this life were called and elected to be the sons of God by adoption. To be adopted into the family of God the father. He said that people were called and elected in this life to be joint heirs with Christ. Receiving, possessing and inheriting equally with him. He said that people were called to glory and dignity and honor and reward. And in summation, what he taught was, that people were called to eternal life. Now, from our knowledge, both of the ancient record, and of what has been revealed in our day, we're well aware that if someone has been called to be pure and clean and spotless to be holy and without blame, of necessity he has been called and elected to be baptized. Because baptism is the gate to purity and perfection. And that if someone is called to be a son of God and a joint heir with Christ, and to have eternal life, he has been called to receive the blessings of the priesthood. He has been called to enter into the order of Celestial marriage. So, people are in effect, for-ordained. Or in other words, they are called and elected to join the church. To get the blessings of baptism, and the blessings of marriage and the blessings of conformity to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Now that's what is meant by being called and elected.

I would suppose that everyone in our congregation today has been called and elected. That is the door has been opened and the blessings of eternal life are available on certain conditions. Now Peter talks about making our calling and election sure. And all in the world that means, is that we pursue the particular appointed course, to the point that we get a guarantee that we will receive the things to which we have been called. That we will inherit the promised foreordained blessings. And so, what is involved is really 3 things. And number 1 is baptism and number 2 is celestial marriage and number 3 is then so living that in fact our calling and election does become sure. Well, what happens when someone is baptized? Baptism is the gate to eternal life. Baptism puts someone on a path leading to eternal life, or leading in other words to the glory and might and dominion the exaltation that God our Father possesses.

Now celestial marriage is in essence, the same thing. Celestial marriage also puts someone on the path leading to exhalation and glory in the eternal worlds. And so, uh to have our calling and election made sure means, 1st that we get baptized and get on the straight and narrow path that leads TO eternal life. And then we traverse the length of the path. And go upward and onward through righteousness and devotion, through acquiring as our text passage said, the attributes of godliness. The thing about baptism is this. IN IT we get a conditional promise of eternal life. We get the promise, "son thou shalt have eternal life, IF you will now keep my commandments". Now in principle and in essence, the same thing applies to celestial marriage. We enter into that order of the priesthood which is a patriarchal order, and the door is opened to eternal life again. The door to the highest heaven within the celestial world. That being the only place where the family unit continues. And so we get married, we become husband and wife for eternity in the temple. We're married by the sealing power that Elijah the prophet restored. And again we have the promise given of eternal life. We're assured exaltation. But it is given in terms and in essence as it was with baptism. The Lord says to us in effect, "son, thou shalt be exalted IF you now keep the terms and conditions of this everlasting covenant of marriage." We get conditional promises in baptism, we get conditional promises in celestial marriage.

Now what Peter announces is, that there is such a thing as making those conditional promises absolute. Now obviously any person who gains exaltation in the ultimate and in the end has made his calling and election sure. So in one manner of speaking, no one will ever gain

exaltation, no one will ever have the family unit continue in eternity unless his calling and election has been made sure. Or in other words, unless he's gained the promise that he shall inherit eternal life. But on the other hand, when we talk about this, what we ordinarily mean is, that for some individuals who pursue a course of righteousness and devotion, the day of judgement is in effect advanced, so that some time along the line as they're pursuing the course, leading to exaltation, the Lord finally says to them, "Son, thou shalt be exalted." And at that time, they then have their calling and election made sure, and they have for all practical purposes worked out their salvation and have the assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Now, making one's calling and election sure, grows out of baptism for one thing. But it grows out of celestial marriage for another thing. And since it grows out of celestial marriage, the Lord took occasion to reveal the doctrine relative to it, in connection with the revelation on marriage. You enter in at this gate of marriage, and you pursue a steadfast course and you gain eternal life. Well, as he revealed it in connection with marriage it's this: It's first you're married. You enter in at the gate and you start living right. And then it is, that at whatever subsequent time is involved. Whenever the day arrives that by devotion and righteousness you've proved yourself at all hazards. Then the Lord says this, right out of the revelation, "Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection, and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities and powers, dominions all heights and depths." In other words, it's possible for God by revelation as we read in a previous statement to tell someone that their calling and election has been made sure and that they are sealed up unto eternal life. And of such individuals it says, "They shall pass by the angels and the gods which are set there. To their exaltation and glory in all things as hath been sealed upon their heads. Which glory shall be", and this next now is a definition of what's involved in exaltation or in other words, in eternal life, and it consists of two things, "Which glory shall be a fullness," that's one thing. The fullness of the glory of the Father, "And", and this is the second thing, "a continuation of the seeds for ever and ever. Then shall they be gods." That is, they have eternal life, they have exaltation. Exaltation consists in being like God our Father. The whole purpose of our creation is to progress from our first spirit estate, to the final glorious dominion and exaltation that God our Father has. So that we become like Him. This is what life is about. Somebody gets a patriarchal blessing and it says, "You shall fill the full measure of your creation." Well, if you fill the full measure of your creation, you go on along this course of progression and advancement until you have eternal life in the kingdom of God. Now there's considerable more language here that talks about this same thing, but we won't read it. I'd like rather to read one sentence that the prophet said, "After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, which is the first comforter. Then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, "Son, thou shalt be exalted."

When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man has determined to serve him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure. Now, one illustration of this, and quite properly this illustration is the prophet Joseph Smith. For us in our day and dispensation, he as a follower of Christ has marked the way, and set the pattern of what we ought to do. So the Lord said to him, "I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world and through all eternity. For verily I seal upon you, your exaltation and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham, your father." In other words, Joseph Smith had his calling and election made sure. For him, the day of judgement was advanced to appoint in this life where he having been proved and tried at all hazards, was accounted worthy. He'd done the things by that time that qualified him to go on to eternal life in the kingdom of God. Now, without amplifying, without saying more, this is the doctrine that's involved. It's a true doctrine and it's a sound doctrine. Well, what does it mean to us? This is not something that's beyond us. It's not over and above. Outside the realm of our capabilities of obtaining. The Lord wouldn't offer baptism to a people and say, "all right, be baptized and

you can be saved in my kingdom”, unless he knew that the people had it within their power to enter into baptism and do the things that would result in the promised salvation. And the Lord wouldn’t offer to a people celestial marriage, and say to them, “Now enter this order of matrimony and keep the covenant, and you’ll have eternal life,” unless he knew that the people had the talent and the spiritual capacity and ability to gain the promised reward. And the same thing applies to making our calling and election sure. The Lord wouldn’t say to us, “make your calling and election sure,” unless he knew it was within our spiritual potential. Unless we had the capacity and ability to press forward in steadfastness and devotion, until that desired eventuality occurred.

Now I’m suggesting that this is within the realm of probability and of possibility for the members of the church today. *There are many as a matter of actual fact in the church, who have obtained such a status.* Now what this ought to do to us, I think, is cause us to make a firm, unshakable determination, to gain the blessings and benefits of baptism. To gain the blessings and benefits of celestial marriage. And in each instance, those blessings accrue on conditions that we keep the covenants that we made in connection with those holy ordinances. In one manner of speaking, *this is the most glorious doctrine that there is in the church. It’s the doctrine that assures people of eternal reward in the kingdom of God.* And by the grace and glory and goodness of a merciful Father, he’s restored in this our day, the knowledge, the doctrine, the keys, the priesthood, the powers, everything that’s needed to seal men up unto eternal life. And our objective, our goal, our aim, our determination in this life, should be, or is, to press forward with that steadfastness and devotion. Which will give us complete peace, and satisfaction and joy in this life, and then eternal life in the world to come. He that doeth the works of righteousness, shall receive his reward. Even peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. In the name of Jesus Chris, amen.