

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE (EPISODE 154)

LESSON 28

"We Are Witnesses"

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| Hook | From a tender age members of the LDS Church are taught to "share their testimony"... whether or not people want to hear, frankly. Should it matter? What is the best way to be a witness for Jesus Christ and the gospel? |
| Manual Goal | To remind class members of their responsibility to be witnesses of <u>Jesus Christ</u> and to help them see how the gift of the <u>Holy Ghost</u> helps them do so. |
| EGD Goal | To help class members understand the differences between apostolic and member witness of Jesus Christ and the gospel and to share testimony in constructive, loving ways. |
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In a sense this lesson is a mixture of these two (which is why I am putting this one out as a mini-episode):

<http://www.mormonsundayschool.org/070-missionary-work-iii-dc-and-church-history-41/>

<http://www.mormonsundayschool.org/132-apostles-of-jesus-christ-new-testament-lesson-6/>

Also see:

<http://www.mormonsundayschool.org/037-doctrine-covenants-lesson-11-the-field-is-white-already-to-harvest/>

(Missionary work, the one about our responsibility)
(apostles)

Lesson 28: Jesus' Apostles (look back at my earlier lesson, link to it) (Shift this lesson to be about *witnessing* more than about apostles... I kind of misunderstood

- I. Sunday School
 - a. The idea of witnessing or bearing testimony in LDS culture
 - b. Review the reading
 - c. Our responsibility to bear witness
 - d. Bearing witness effectively
 - e. Why apostles? (It isn't so much about the quality of witness, but for order, opportunity to dedicate their lives to serving and witnessing, stewardship etc)
 - f. Review the reading
 - g. Our responsibility to witness (this is the focus of the lesson)

- h. Bearing witness effectively (talk about how it can backfire, needs to be sincere, not just a project, needs to be based on true caring and respect for the other person, sometimes it is best to say nothing)
- i. New Testament apostles: What do we know?
- j. Apostolic and individual witness
- k. Conclusion I

II. Scripture Study

- a. Return to the reading
- b. Classes of apostles:
 - i. The 12 from Jesus' ministry (and Matthias added in Acts)
 - ii. Paul
 - iii. Other apostles (most significant is Romans 16:7 where Junia is called "foremost among the apostles).
 - iv. The fate of Jesus' apostles
- c. Anonymity, misattribution, Pseudepigraphy! We don't have the writings of apostles

III. Study Notes

- a. Bring up that point about assuming people care, can come across as offensive
- b. Apostolic authority in LDS and historical context
- c. Apostles in the current Church
- d. Conclusion II

Step 1: Convert thyself

Step 2: Show sincere interest in others, including learning from them

Step 3: Love others where they are

Step 4: "Preach" by example

Step 5: Let the process run its course, acting by the Spirit

Step 6: Allow yourself to learn and change as well

Step 7: Whether or not change happens, continue to love the person

What type of witness?

Elder Eyring:

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1996/10/witnesses-for-god?lang=eng>

"I am grateful that I know as surely as did the Apostles Peter, James, and John that Jesus is the Christ, our risen Lord, and that he is our advocate with the Father."

Elder Faust, BYU Speech in 1979

<http://speeches.byu.edu/?act=viewitem&id=849>

In my journal for September 28, 1978, it is noted, “Today I was called as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have prayed to make myself somehow worthy in a small measure and to be qualified, and I hope that I come to this new calling with a pure heart and purged of all personal ambition.”

I will not chronicle further the details concerning this calling because they are so personal and so sacred that the smallest part which one feels cannot be said. I am certain that it is an experience like none other. It is a feeling of terrible aloneness, a feeling of wounds in the heart, a feeling of sweet agony. There are the buffetings of Satan, and the encircling warm comfort of the Spirit of the Master. There are the feelings of crushing burden, self-doubt, and unworthiness—the fleeting feeling of being alone, and then of being reinforced a hundredfold. This special sacred feeling is a sustaining influence, and often a very close companion. I have prayed to be sustained in a work that I have come to appreciate more than life itself.

ABC Interview with President Hinckley:

<http://www.abc.net.au/compass/intervs/hinckley.htm>

Now we don't need a lot of continuing revelation. We have a great, basic reservoir of revelation. But if a problem arises, as it does occasionally, a vexatious thing with which we have to deal, we go to the Lord in prayer. We discuss it as a First Presidency and as a Council of the Twelve Apostles. We pray about it and then comes the whisperings of a still small voice. And we know the direction we should take and we proceed accordingly.

Nature of Apostolic Witness:

Good distinction:

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1989/10/continuous-revelation?lang=eng>

President Faust:

The prophets, seers, and revelators have had and still have the responsibility and privilege of receiving and declaring the word of God for the world. Individual members, parents, and leaders have the right to receive revelation for their own responsibility but have no duty nor right to declare the word of God beyond the limits of their own responsibility.

Notice it is not the quality of witness that differs, but rather the responsibility.

Elder Oaks:

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2006/06/dating-versus-hanging-out?lang=eng>

As a General Authority, I have the responsibility to preach general principles. When I do, I don't try to define all the exceptions.... But don't ask me to give an opinion on your exception. I only teach the general rules. Whether an exception applies to you is your responsibility. You must work that out individually between you and the Lord.

The Prophet [Joseph Smith](#) taught this same thing in another way. When he was asked how he governed such a diverse group of Saints, he said, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”⁴ In what I have just said, I am simply teaching correct principles and inviting each one of you to act upon these principles by governing yourself.

| Matt. 10:2-4 | Mark 3:13-19 | Luke 6:13-16 | Acts 1:13 |
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| <p>These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector (?); James son of Alphaeus, and <i>Thaddaeus</i>; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.</p> | <p>He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons. So he appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and <i>Thaddaeus</i>, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.</p> | <p>And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, and <i>Judas son of James</i>, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.</p> | <p>When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and <i>Judas son of James</i>.</p> |

Where is Levi?

1. Simon Peter: Son of Jonah or John. Peter is a nickname (Aramaic “Kepha”, Greek form Cephas) meaning stone, rock, rocky. Fisherman of the poorer class, didn’t own their own boat (Zebedee seemed to have the boats and servants). His wife later traveled with him on some of his missionary journeys (1 Cor. 9:5). Leader of the 12. After the Jerusalem

council Peter disappears, James the brother of Jesus becoming the main leader of the Jerusalem Church. Reliable tradition says he was martyred when Nero persecuted the Christians (64 CE), possibly by crucifixion.

2. James: Son of Zebedee, brother of John, partner of Peter. Inner circle of three. “James and John either expressed themselves explosively or expected God to bring sudden judgment on the enemies of Jesus, for they were nicknamed “boanerges” (sons of thunder). Acts 12:2 contains the cryptic note that Herod (Agrippa I) had him killed “with the sword”
3. John: Son of Zebedee, brother of James, partner of Peter. James and John were called immediately after Peter. Part of the inner circle of three. Salome was possibly the name of John’s mother (see Mark 15:40 and Matt 27:56). Moderately successful fisherman since they had servants. Mark 1:21 suggests they lived near Capernaum. Likely John was younger than James since he is always listed second.
4. Andrew: Brother of Simon, also a fisherman. In John (1:35-42) depicted as first a disciple of John the Baptist. Listed either as second (Matt. 10:2; Luke 6:14) or fourth (Mark 3:18; Acts 1:13). According to late (thus unreliable) tradition he was crucified on an X shaped cross.
5. Philip: Only mentioned in the list of disciples. May have been a disciple of John the Baptist since his call took place near Bethany beyond Jordan where John was baptizing. Acts as intermediary between Christ and Greeks. He spoke Greek, had a Greek name, came from Bethsaida, predominantly Greek area. Was later confused with Philip the Evangelist, mentioned in Acts.
6. Bartholemew: (Possibly Nathaniel bar Tholmai?). Nothing else known.
7. Thomas: Mentioned all lists, only important in John. His demand for physical proof of resurrection led to the term “doubting Thomas”. An important character in later extracanonical gospels and Acts. Tradition holds he preached the gospel all the way to India.
8. Matthew: (Levi? Levi is called but not in lists) Appears in the lists, mentioned in Matthew as a tax collector. In Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27, tax collector is called Levi. Nothing else known.
9. James son of Alphaeus: From Galilee. Probably the same person as James the younger (or “small”). If so, this “otherwise unknown apostle had a mother named Mary who was present at the crucifixion and was a witness of the resurrection and a brother Joseph (or Joses) who was probably a well known early Christian (Matt. 27:56; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10)
10. Simon the Cananean: Possibly “from Cana”, but that doesn’t explain the second “n”. More likely “Simon the Zealot”. Fascinating implications since “zealots” were revolutionaries, but we don’t otherwise know about this figure.
11. Judas Iscariot: Likely means “man from Kerioth” Remembered for his betrayal of Jesus (likely told the Sadducees that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah in private). “Accounts of Judas are varied, inconsistent, and influenced by theological opinions of the writers, the belief in the fulfillment of scripture, and the idea that God brings death to ungodly persons.” Thus difficult to assess him historically. It is possible that he was trying to

force God's hand to fix the world by endangering his Messiah, or he felt the betrayal was justified for other reasons.

12. Thaddaeus? Judas son of James? (in some lists but not others)

13. Nathaniel? (John 1:45-46) (not in Synoptic lists)