



The Gospel Doctrine Class



Doctrine & Covenants - Lesson 35

A Mission of Saving

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God; 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." (D&C 18:10-11)

D&C 4:3-7; 18:10-16; 52:40; 81:5-6; 138:58;
3 Nephi 18:31-32; Moroni 7:45-48

A study of this lesson will us teach about the rescue of the Martin and Willie handcart companies, to show that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of rescue, and to encourage us to help rescue those in need.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking about the pioneers: "I will never get over being thankful to them; I hope you never get over being thankful to them. I hope that we will always remember them. ... Let us read again and again, and read to our children or our children's children, the accounts of those who suffered so much." (Church News, 31 July 1999, p5)

The Martin company finally reached the Salt Lake valley on Sunday November 30, 1856. President Young was leading services in the old Tabernacle. When President Young learned of their arrival, he said to the congregation, "The afternoon meeting will be omitted, for I wish the sisters to go home and prepare to give those who have just arrived a mouthful of something to eat, and to wash them, and nurse them up.... Prayer is good, but when (as on this occasion) baked potatoes, and pudding, and milk are needed, prayer will not supply their place. Give every duty its proper time and place.... I want you to understand that I desire this people to nurse them up; we want you to receive them as your own children, and to have the same feelings for them.... Now that the most of them are here, we will continue our labors of love until they are able to take care of themselves, and we will receive the blessing. You need not be distrustful about that, for the Lord will bless this people." (Comprehensive History of the Church, 4:100-101)

Author, Wallace Stegner, not a member of the Church, wrote: "Perhaps their suffering seems less dramatic because the handcart pioneers bore it meekly, praising God, instead of fighting for life with the ferocity of animals and eating their dead to keep their own life beating, as both the Fremont and Donner parties did. But if courage and endurance make a story, if humankindness and helpfulness and brotherly love in the midst of raw horror are worth recording, this half-forgotten episode of the Mormon migration is one of the great tales of the West and

of America." (Faith In Every Footstep)

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "It is because of the sacrificial redemption wrought by the Savior of the world that the great plan of the eternal gospel is made available to us, under which those who die in the Lord shall not taste of death but shall have the opportunity of going on to a celestial and eternal glory.

"In our own helplessness, He becomes our rescuer, saving us from damnation and bringing us to eternal life.

"In times of despair, in seasons of loneliness and fear, He is there on the horizon to bring succor and comfort and assurance and faith. He is our King, our Savior, our Deliverer, our Lord and our God." (Ensign, Nov 1991, p54).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "I am grateful that those days of pioneering are behind us. I am thankful that we do not have brethren and sisters stranded in the snow, freezing and dying, while trying to get to this, their Zion in the mountains. But there are people, not a few, whose circumstances are desperate and who cry out for help and relief.

"There are so many who are hungry and destitute across this world who need help. ... Ours is a great and solemn duty to reach out and help them, to lift them, to feed them if they are hungry, to nurture their spirits if they thirst for truth and righteousness.

"There are so many young people who wander aimlessly and walk the tragic trail of drugs, gangs, immorality, and the whole brood of ills that accompany these things. There are widows who long for friendly voices and that spirit of anxious concern which speaks of love. There are those who were once warm in the faith, but whose faith has grown cold. Many of them wish to come back but do not know quite how to do it. They need friendly hands reaching out to them. With a little effort, many of them can be brought back to feast again at the table of the Lord.

"My brethren and sisters, I would hope, I would pray that each of us ... would resolve to seek those who need help, who are in desperate and difficult circumstances, and lift them in the spirit of love into the embrace of the Church, where strong hands and loving hearts will warm them, comfort them, sustain them, and put them on the way of happy and productive lives." (Ensign, Nov 1996, p86)

Next Week's Reading Assignment

Our Heritage, pages 81-96; Class Member Study Guide