



The LifeLine



Summer 2023

"Contending for the faith"

lifeline2rlds.org

Carol's Corner...

It Hurts

I doubt very many of us like pain. I know, I don't. But it would also surprise me if anyone who has left the RLDS/Community of Christ church didn't experience some pain as they walked down that path. I recall that the first time someone compared the Christian gospel of the Bible with the gospel of Joseph Smith with me, I was shocked!

But looking back, I realized that the beliefs that I had cherished in the RLDS church had been passed down to me by family members and longtime friends who I loved and trusted completely. So, it hurt when I started to learn something different.

So, where does this kind of pain come from? It comes from having long-time, deeply felt beliefs challenged with truths we probably never heard before. Our souls have been shaken. It's almost like we don't know what to believe anymore. But after we give ourselves time to think about this new information, we realize that our understanding of Bible truths need to change.

Christian pastors generally choose their profession so that they can provide people comfort. Sadly, what many of them may not understand is that when they challenge a person's false beliefs, it will likely inflict emotional pain.

Lynn Wilder in her book, *Unveiling Grace*, recalls the simple step a pastor took that resulted in her

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Who in Your Life is Stubborn?

Do you find yourself getting frustrated when you present the gospel of Jesus Christ to family and friends who still follow Joseph Smith's beliefs? Do you feel that when they reject what you're saying that they are being stubborn?

Read Exodus 7:8 through 12:30, putting yourself in the place of Moses as he tries to convince Pharaoh to free the Israelites. Talk about stubborn! Despite Egypt being hit with nine different plagues, it wasn't until the tenth, the plague of the first born, that Pharaoh relents and allows the Israelites to be freed from slavery and leave the country.

While behind the scenes it was God who hardened Pharaoh's heart, it had a purpose. It was so that His power could be fully displayed and his future plan of salvation to be demonstrated. The act of Jews smearing the blood of a perfect, first-born lamb over their doorposts to save them from the angel of death that struck the rest of the country, was a foreshadowing of what it means to accept Christ's blood sacrifice. Pharaoh's continued rejection of Moses' demand that he free the Israelites ended up costing the lives of every first born male child and animal not protected by the blood of a lamb on their doorpost.

Jesus and the apostle Paul didn't have it much better than Moses. Both quote Isaiah 6:9-10 in slightly different ways; Paul in Acts 28:26-27 and Jesus in Matthew 13:14-15, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10 and John 12:39-40.

In Matthew 13:14-15 Jesus tells his disciples why he uses parables to convey his message, "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever

believe Joseph Smith's distorted and diminished version of Christianity that is based on works and as a result puts their eternal destiny in doubt?

One way that we can see how Joseph distorted and diminished Christianity is by comparing verses in Joseph's Inspired Version with verses from the original King James Version (KJV), which his "translation" was based on. One example can be seen in Romans 4:16a. In the KJV it

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reads, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace...." The same verse in the Inspired Version reads, "Therefore ye are justified of faith

and works through grace...." For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."

But does this mean that we should use these examples as reasons to give up sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ? Let's hope not! When we repented of our sins and testified that we believed in Christ as our Lord and Savior, all doubt of our eternal destiny with God was removed. We have become reconciled with God. Don't we want the same for our family and friends who

and works through grace...." The phrase, "and works" has been added in the Inspired Version. This small addition looms large in limiting the significance of the gift of grace that we as Christians received.

Another example can be found in Romans 4:5 where we read in the KJV, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." But in the Inspired Version the same verse reads, "But to him that seeketh not to be justified by the law of works, but believeth on him who justifieth *not* the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

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first son leaving the Mormon church. The pastor challenged her son, Micah, to read the New Testament when he was on his mission. When he came home prematurely, the rest of the family couldn't grasp what had happened. He gave them the same challenge as the pastor had given him and the entire family left the church.

Fortunately, the pain is only temporary. When one moves from the uncertainty of how they will experience eternity to certainty, the pain is forgotten and replaced by joy.

...“Stubborn” continued from front

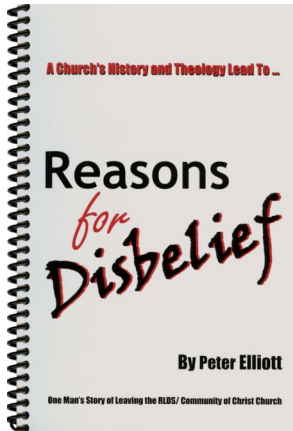
The verse in the Inspired Version denied the justification (regard or treat as righteous and worth of salvation) of the ungodly with a single word.

Perhaps we can be encouraged by the Apostle Paul. Prior to his conversion to Christianity and his name change from Saul to Paul, he was a zealous Jew who persecuted the Christians of his day. But in Romans he de-

votes a significant portion of the book lamenting the Jews rejection of Christ and the forgiveness and grace that God offers all through Christ. Read Chapters 2 through 11 in Romans, but where Paul mentions Jews, mentally insert “followers of Joseph Smith.” You may find that his lament becomes your lament for your family and friends still in that belief system. And perhaps his hope becomes

your hope for them as well. Despite many struggles during his lifetime, Paul writes in Romans 1:16a, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes....” Our prayer is that you seek God’s power to help you reach out to your family and friends no matter how stubborn they may appear to be.

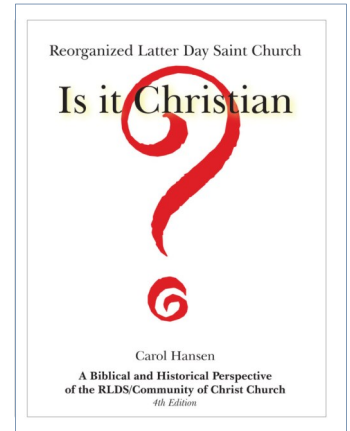
Resources Available



A 3-year investigation into the church of his youth resulted in Peter Elliott's book, *A Church's History and Theology Lead To... Reasons for Disbelief*. He tells why he chose to leave the RLDS/Community of Christ. \$10.00 incl. postage



Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church Is it Christian? is a thoroughly documented book on the RLDS/Community of Christ church's history, doctrine and scriptures. \$25.00 incl. postage



These resources are available directly from LifeLine's website, some in printed form and as a PDF. You can purchase copies at:

https://www.lifeline2rlds.org/wp/?page_id=540 or by sending a check to LifeLine Ministries to RLDS, P.O. Box 1536, Independence, MO 64055.

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