

“The Prisoners Shall Go Free”

Outline

- I. Framing
- II. Discussion of new resources
- III. Productive Sunday Schooling
 - a. Why do we do temple work? (as always, try to get honest, engaged answers)
 - b. Why not just wait for the millennium?
 - c. How does redeeming the dead bless us and our families?
 - d. Remembering our ancestors
 - e. “Prisoners shall go free”: How can we increase freedom in our lives and the lives of others?
 - f. Conclusion

Full episode overview

Manual Goal: To help class members rejoice in their opportunity to provide ordinances for the dead.

Engaging Gospel Doctrine Goal: To help class members appreciate how temple work benefits both the living and the dead.

There is power in the way we do work for the dead. One person present, performing an ordinance for one person past (and passed), taking time out of their busy lives to serve someone they don't know.

Temple going as meditative practice (meditation is actually one of the most powerful things we can do to change our brains... remember the purpose of the gospel is transformation!)

Temples slow us down, give us perspective

The title of the lesson is “The Prisoners Shall Go Free”

What is the status of literal prisoners in your community? (I interviewed for a prison chaplain position, lots of volunteering to do there)

In what way are we and those around us “prisoners”? I know I often feel trapped by circumstance and am working to claim my freedom, the freedom to respond (my patient who is getting locked in his body)

Outline

Framing

Here’s a provocative point to start on: I think temple work is for us. Let’s talk through the theology for a bit.

Accepting that yes, every single person needs to receive the temple ordinances, in person or by proxy, why not just wait until the Millennium? With upgraded Millennium temples could we go through an endowment in two minutes? ☺ Or is there a truer version of the rituals that are more efficient?

Discussion of new resources

[Lesson 30: “The Prisoners Shall Go Free”](#)

- [“Letters on Baptism for the Dead”](#): This article gives context for the revelations included in Doctrine and Covenants 127 and 128. It is helpful to be aware that baptism for the dead does address a fundamental problem with Christian doctrine (that everyone needs to be saved by Jesus, which then begs the question of what happens to all those who have never heard of Jesus during their lifetime)

In January 1836, Joseph Smith saw a vision of the celestial kingdom in which he learned that those who did not receive the fulness of the gospel in this life but would have if given the chance, such as his brother Alvin, would not be denied the highest rewards in the life to come. With this vision, the Lord began to gradually reveal the doctrines and practices surrounding baptism for the dead to Joseph Smith and his successors over the course of several years.

Joseph’s vision affirmed God’s mercy, but it was not entirely clear whether the scriptural requirement of baptism would be waived for Alvin and others like him or whether it would be fulfilled in some other way.

Interesting: “the Saints had performed the baptisms without regard to gender, men being baptized for women and women for men” Why would this be a problem? Young changed it.

- [“Ministry of John Taylor: Work for the Dead”](#): This one-minute video highlights John Taylor’s teachings on redeeming the dead. Make heaven on earth. I love that. Temples also represent the connecting point of heaven and earth.

Productive Sunday Schooling

Why do we do temple work? (as always, try to get honest, engaged answers)

Why not just wait for the millennium?

How does redeeming the dead bless us and our families?

Remembering our ancestors

“Prisoners shall go free”: How can we increase freedom in our lives and the lives of others?

Conclusion

Full episode overview

Ancient precedents to vicarious rituals including the interpretation of 1 Cor. 15:29

- The background to vicarious ordinances in Church History
- The way approaches to redeeming the dead have changed over time with a focus on the concept of adoption

- The logic behind the idea of vicarious ordinances.
 - How does this practice solve a fundamental problem with Christianity?
 - What do we get out of performing vicarious ordinances for the dead?
 - In what way do the dead need the ordinances to be saved?
 - Why not just wait until the millennium?