

## “After all we can do...”

How is it that we come unto Christ?

This is one of the most basic, yet least understood principles, in most, if not all, sects of Christianity. Religions tend to set-up systems of rules, policies, procedures, in an effort to “guide” those who attach themselves to, or identify as “members” of, these religions.

Speaking through a prophet in the late 1820s the Lord taught:

67 Behold, *this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church.*

68 Whosoever *declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me*, but is against me; therefore *he is not of my church.*

D&C 10:67-68

The title of this paper comes directly from the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi, Chapter 25. In this chapter Nephi is discussing the law he and his people were given (the Law of Moses) and the grace (mercy and enabling power) of Christ. He makes the statement that we are saved by grace—but then qualifies it as that grace being extended “after all we can do”. The purpose of this document is to allow the scriptures to do the teaching regarding those things that might be part of “all we can do” in order to have Christ’s grace applied to our lives that we might truly repent, come unto him, and be numbered amongst His church and people.

That said I’ll let the scriptures do the talking...

23 For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do.*

24 And, notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled.

25 For, for this end was the law given; wherefore *the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith*; yet we keep the law because of the commandments.

26 And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.

27 Wherefore, *we speak concerning the law that our children may know the deadness of the law*; and they, by knowing the deadness of the law, may look forward unto that life which is in Christ, and know for what end the law was given. And after the law is fulfilled in Christ, that they need not harden their hearts against him when the law ought to be done away.

2 Nephi 25:23-27

1 Behold, I say unto you that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning.

2 Wherefore, although a man should be baptized an hundred times it availeth him nothing, for you cannot enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses, neither by your dead works.

3 For it is because of your dead works that I have caused this last covenant and this church to be built up unto me, even as in days of old.

4 Wherefore, enter ye in at the gate, as I have commanded, and seek not to counsel your God.

Amen.

D&C 22:1-4

So how do we enter in at the gate?

17 Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. ***For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.***

18 And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive.

2 Nephi 31:17-18

15 Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.

16 I came unto my own, and my own received me not. And the scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled.

17 And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled.

18 I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

19 And ye shall ***offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood;*** yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings.

20 And ***ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit.*** And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not.

21 Behold, I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.

22 Therefore, ***whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive,*** for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; ***therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved.***

3 Nephi 9:15-22

7 Behold, ***he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit;*** and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

2 Nephi 2:7

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to *fulfil*;

18 For verily I say unto you, one jot nor one tittle hath not passed away from the law, but *in me it hath all been fulfilled*.

19 And behold, I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall *repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit*. Behold, ye have the commandments before you, and the law is fulfilled.

20 Therefore *come unto me and be ye saved*; for verily I say unto you, that except ye shall keep my commandments, which I have commanded you at this time, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

3 Nephi 12:17-20

10 And it came to pass that the Nephites began to repent of their iniquity, and began to cry even as had been prophesied by Samuel the prophet; for behold no man could keep that which was his own, for the thieves, and the robbers, and the murderers, and the magic art, and the witchcraft which was in the land.

11 Thus there began to be a mourning and a lamentation in all the land because of these things, and more especially among the people of Nephi.

12 And it came to pass that when I, Mormon, saw their lamentation and their mourning and their sorrow before the Lord, my heart did begin to rejoice within me, knowing the mercies and the long-suffering of the Lord, therefore supposing that he would be merciful unto them that they would again become a righteous people.

13 But behold this *my joy was vain, for their sorrowing was not unto repentance*, because of the goodness of God; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin.

14 *And they did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits*, but they did curse God, and wish to die. Nevertheless they would struggle with the sword for their lives.

15 And it came to pass that my sorrow did return unto me again, and *I saw that the day of grace was passed with them*, both temporally and spiritually; for I saw thousands of them hewn down in open rebellion against their God, and heaped up as dung upon the face of the land. And thus \*three hundred and forty and four years had passed away.

Mormon 2:10-15

57 Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence; for, in the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time.

58 Therefore I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children, saying:

59 That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory;

60 *For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified;*

61 Therefore *it is given to abide in you*; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment.

62 And now, behold, I say unto you: *This is the plan of salvation unto all men*, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time.

63 And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me.

64 And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that *Adam cried unto the Lord*, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water.

65 And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.

66 And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: *Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost*. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever;

67 And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity.

68 Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen.

Moses 6:57-68

13 Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

14 *And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross*; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, *that I might draw all men unto me*, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

15 And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.

16 And it shall come to pass, that *whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled*; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

17 And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.

18 And this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words.

19 And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

20 *Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.*

**21 Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do;**

**22 Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day.**

3 Nephi 27:13-22

1 And now I speak concerning **baptism**. Behold, elders, priests, and teachers were baptized; and they were not baptized save they brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it.

2 Neither did they receive any unto baptism **save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit**, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins.

3 And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.

4 And **after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost**, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and **nourished by the good word of God**, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, **relying alone upon the merits of Christ**, who was the author and the finisher of their faith.

Moroni 6:1-4

37 And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism—All those who **humble themselves** before God, and **desire to be baptized**, and **come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits**, and witness before the church that they have truly **repented of all their sins**, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly **manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins**, shall be received by baptism into his church.

D&C 20:37

17 **Wo unto you poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite**, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men's goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, and who will not labor with your own hands!

18 But blessed are the poor who are **pure in heart, whose hearts are broken, and whose spirits are contrite**, for **they shall see the kingdom of God coming in power and great glory unto their deliverance**; for the fatness of the earth shall be theirs.

D&C 56:17-18

24 Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold **I am the light which ye shall hold up**—that which ye have seen me do. Behold ye see that I have prayed unto the Father, and ye all have witnessed.

25 And ye see that I have commanded that none of you should go away, but rather **have commanded that ye should come unto me**, that ye might feel and see; even so shall ye do unto the world; and **whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation**.

3 Nephi 18:24-25

39 But this is not all; for he expounded unto them the *plan of redemption*, which was prepared from the foundation of the world; and he also made known unto them concerning *the coming of Christ, and all the works of the Lord did he make known unto them*.

40 And it came to pass that after he had said all these things, and expounded them to the king, that the king believed all his words.

41 And he began to *cry unto the Lord*, saying: *O Lord, have mercy*; according to thy abundant mercy which thou hast had upon the people of Nephi, have upon me, and my people.

Alma 18:39-41

13 And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the creation of Adam, laying the *fall of man before him*, and their *carnal state* and also the *plan of redemption*, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, *through Christ*, for all whosoever would *believe on his name*.

14 And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but *the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins*, through *faith and repentance*, and so forth; and that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory; and Aaron did expound all these things unto the king.

15 And it came to pass that after Aaron had expounded these things unto him, the king said: *What shall I do that I may have this eternal life* of which thou hast spoken? Yea, *what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day*? Behold, said he, *I will give up all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy*.

16 But Aaron said unto him: If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt *bow down before God*, yea, if thou wilt *repent of all thy sins*, and will bow down before God, and *call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive*, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest.

17 And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even *he did prostrate himself upon the earth*, and cried mightily, saying:

18 O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, *wilt thou make thyself known unto me*, and *I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day*. And now when the king had said these words, he was struck as if he were dead.

Alma 22:13-18

29 And it came to pass that there came a voice as if it were above the cloud of darkness, saying: *Repent ye, repent ye*, and seek no more to destroy my servants whom I have sent unto you to declare good tidings.

30 And it came to pass when they heard this voice, and beheld that it was not a voice of thunder, neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul—

31 And notwithstanding the mildness of the voice, behold the earth shook exceedingly, and the walls of the prison trembled again, as if it were about to tumble to the earth; and behold the cloud of darkness, which had overshadowed them, did not disperse—

32 And behold the voice came again, saying: *Repent ye, repent ye*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; and seek no more to destroy my servants. And it came to pass that the earth shook again, and the walls trembled.

33 And also again the third time the voice came, and did speak unto them marvelous words which cannot be uttered by man; and the walls did tremble again, and the earth shook as if it were about to divide asunder.

40 And it came to pass that the Lamanites said unto him: What shall we do, that this *cloud of darkness may be removed* from overshadowing us?

41 And Aminadab said unto them: You must *repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ*, who was taught unto you by Alma, and Amulek, and Zeezrom; and when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you.

42 And it came to pass that *they all did begin to cry unto the voice* of him who had shaken the earth; yea, they did cry even until the cloud of darkness was dispersed.

43 And it came to pass that when they cast their eyes about, and saw that the cloud of darkness was dispersed from overshadowing them, behold, *they saw that they were encircled about, yea every soul, by a pillar of fire*.

44 And Nephi and Lehi were in the midst of them; yea, they were encircled about; yea, they were as if in the midst of a flaming fire, yet it did harm them not, neither did it take hold upon the walls of the prison; and *they were filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory*.

45 And behold, *the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire*, and they could speak forth marvelous words.

46 And it came to pass that there came a voice unto them, yea, a pleasant voice, as if it were a whisper, saying:

47 Peace, *peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved*, who was from the foundation of the world.

48 And now, when they heard this they cast up their eyes as if to behold from whence the voice came; and behold, *they saw the heavens open*; and angels came down out of heaven and ministered unto them.

Helaman 5:29-33, 40-48

15 Behold, when ye shall *rend that veil of unbelief* which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you—yea, when ye shall *call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit*, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.

Ether 4:15

Having reviewed the above - if we are saved by grace “after all we can do” then *what are those things that we can do?*

- We can realize that carnal laws (such as the Law of Moses) can point to Christ but can never save us and are, therefore, dead.
- We can look forward with a hope in Christ
- We can exercise faith in Christ and his power to redeem
- We can repent of, and forsake, our sins - coming unto Christ as he has commanded
- We can forgive others unconditionally
- We can be baptized by immersion (keeping the commandment)
- We can offer an acceptable offering - a broken heart and a contrite spirit

- We can become as a little child, trusting fully in our Lord
- We can cry unto the Lord for forgiveness and salvation until he blesses us

What are things which we cannot do, but that we can receive from God and Christ in their mercy and through their grace?

- We cannot baptize ourselves with Fire—but Christ can
- We cannot baptize ourselves with the Holy Ghost—but Christ can
- We cannot fill our souls with a perfect brightness of Hope—but Christ can
- We cannot fill our hearts with Charity, the pure love of Christ—but Christ can
- We cannot bring about a mighty change of heart in ourselves—but Christ can
- We cannot cleanse our hands and purify our heart—but Christ can
- We cannot engrave the Savior's image into our countenance—but Christ can
- We cannot fill our heart with the song of redeeming love—but Christ can
- We cannot change our carnal nature, bringing about no disposition or desire to do evil in our souls—but Christ can
- We cannot justify our thoughts, words, or deeds—but the Spirit of God can
- We cannot sanctify ourselves—but the blood of Christ can
- We cannot make ourselves perfect—but following the example of Christ in submitting to the will of the Father in all things we can be made new, clean, and perfect in Christ

31 Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine.

32 And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me; and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to ***repent and believe in me***.

33 And whoso ***believeth in me***, and is ***baptized***, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.

34 And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.

35 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ***this is my doctrine***, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for ***he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost***.

36 And thus will the Father bear record of me, and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one.

37 And again I say unto you, ***ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things***.

38 And again I say unto you, ***ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God***.

39 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ***this is my doctrine***, and whoso buildeth upon this ***buildeth upon my rock***, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

40 And whoso shall declare ***more or less than this***, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock; but he ***buildeth upon a sandy foundation***, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them.

3 Nephi 11:31-40



28 And again, I command thee that thou shalt pray vocally as well as in thy heart; yea, before the world as well as in secret, in public as well as in private.

29 And thou shalt *declare glad tidings*, yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and *among every people that thou shalt be permitted to see*.

30 And thou shalt do it with all *humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers*.

31 And *of tenets thou shalt not talk*, but thou shalt declare *repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism, and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost*.

32 Behold, *this is a great and the last commandment* which I shall give unto you concerning this matter; for this shall suffice for thy daily walk, even unto the end of thy life.

D&C 19:28-32

9 And he spake this parable *unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the *one a Pharisee*, and *the other a publican*.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican*.

12 *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess*.

13 And the publican, *standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven*, but *smote upon his breast*, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*.

14 I tell you, *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other*: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Luke 18:9-14

### **Author's thoughts on this parable -**

Going to the Temple to pray would occur during the time the High Priest went in to burn incense as an offering to God. The general population would stand outside and pray. A modern day comparison might be a sacrament or communion as we take the bread and wine.

Priests/priesthood bless and pass these emblems to a congregation. During this time we generally reflect on who we are and what the emblems of Christ's sacrifice mean to us and our standing before him.

Here we have two men -

One who feels that he is righteous and justified by the law he claims to live. He feels he has "earned" his place and the forgiveness he believes he enjoys. He knows he is better than others who do not, or cannot, live the law.

The other knows he is a sinner. He knows he is not justified (or saved) by the law which he struggles to keep. He stands far off, he won't lift his eyes to heaven, he smites his breast publicly (generally an act reserved for women in significant mourning), and he begs God to extend his mercy.

Christ teaches that it is the sinners, who knows they are sinners, who begs for mercy that are justified—not the self-righteous.

Our culture is very interesting. When we wrong another and know we need to “mend a fence” we see people do a few things:

A person might work to earn the forgiveness of those they have wronged. We see them buy things or do things to attempt to obtain the forgiveness of those they want to make things right with.

A person might instead beg for forgiveness from someone they have wronged. In this case they generally have to show a sufficient level of “contrition”—demonstrating a level of apology in order to once again “earn” forgiveness.

Christ’s atonement and our forgiveness through him fits neither of these. Christ already suffered. Christ’s atonement is already placed, by him, on the altar for us to accept and embrace, or to reject. Generally, we reject the atonement due to our own lack of belief, our unwillingness to repent, our own feelings of self-righteousness, or our unwillingness to humble ourselves, and place our own offering—a broken heart and a contrite spirit next to his on the altar.

My love to all who seek Christ  
— One Who Hopes