Mike Stroud 020 Made Sure

Tonight I want to talk to you about the word ‘SURE.’ S-U-R-E. It’s a word that when we read it in the scriptures, and it’s throughout the scriptures in various ways, it might trigger us to pay special attention to what that means. Now, when you think of the word SURE your mind probably goes to the temple. There are some things in the temple that use that word. Always the word SURE ties something in and makes it secure. It secures something. It makes it so that it’s stable, immovable and secure. In some cases, the way Peter uses it in 2nd Peter chapter 1, once you are made sure then you cannot fall. When you think about it in ancient times, when they crucified a person, they drove the nails into their hands based upon the weight of the person being crucified. It’s a well known fact among archeologists in the Middle East and they’ve found ample evidence of Roman Crucifixion. They were, at best, economically minded. They did not want to spend time, energy, or resources any further than they had to in the execution of criminals. So, if they could secure a person’s body to the cross by using nails in the palm then they would do that and be completely satisfied with it. However, if they judged that the person’s body weight would pull the nail through the palm and the flesh of the hand, then they would go ahead and secure the person’s body with nails through the wrist. This insured that the person’s body would not fall off the cross and so they made that execution, that person’s body, ‘sure’ and secure that it could not fall.

An interesting little side light to this is, (and didn’t think about it in time so I didn’t find it) President Kimball, in talking about the crucifixion of the Savior (and I’ll find this for you) said that they fastened the body of the Savior with nails to His palms and then lifted Him upon the cross. He intimated that they did not put nails in his wrists until He was upon the cross and then went up afterwards while He was up there and secured His body with nails through the wrists. It appears they misjudged the weight of the Saviors body and so had to go up, (without taking His body down off the cross-piece) probably with ladders, and fastened it with two more nails in His wrists; thus, securing it so that His body would not fall. Now, with that in mind, that whole thing we hear about in ancient executions and is referred to it in the temple, opens up a whole new pattern of things for us to look at.

Let’s go to2nd Peter, chapter 1. We are going to look at some scriptures that use the word SURE in them. I hope what that’ll do is kind of get you focused and looking in a direction that you haven’t look at before. You can read all of the verses down, but I want to go to verse 10. Verses 1 through 10 lists out the steps, having what Peter calls is the only place in the scriptures where this term is used, this is verse 10, ***“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure:”*** So, there’s another term now that uses the word SURE. And by the way that’s the only place in all of the scriptures that uses the term *‘calling and election made sure’* is used. Now, the process and having ones ‘calling and election’ is referred to, you can see it all through the scriptures, but is not referred to with that terminology. But look what comes after ‘give diligence to calling and election made sure:’ ***“for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:”*** Now there is your key. So anytime that we see the word *SURE* and the Lord uses it in specific ways, know that you are secure, that you’ve obtained something that you can’t fall from. And then in verse 11, ***“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*** That entrance is you entering into the presence of the Father and the Son to sit upon thrones and to inherit all that they have because you have made your *‘calling and election sure’* and shall never fall. We have talked about calling and election in the past but we won’t go into that right now.

Now, let’s go to another one. Let’s go to Doctrine and Covenants 131:5. On May 17th, 1843, the prophet said this**, “The more sure word of ‘prophecy means a man’s knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood.”** Now we talked about the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation last week. So, we tie all these keys in and they are like jigsaw puzzles that when you pull it together you make this marvelous ceramic that pulls things together and shows you a picture of your pathway back to the Father. When you obtain this more ‘*sure*’ word of prophecy you know that you’re sealed up to eternal life. You have obtained that promise and the interesting term is ‘the more *sure* word.’ You can receive the word of prophecy and obtain a promise, but this one makes it ‘*sure*,’ meaning you cannot fail. You obtain promises from the Lord that insure, and isn’t it interesting that the word ‘insure’ has within it the word ‘*sure*.’ It insures that you have a Heavenly Inheritance with the Father and the Son. What we should seek for, we should seek for these things. We should ask the Lord; we should knock and obtain these precious promises that Peter talks about.

 Now, let me show you another one. Let’s go over to Isaiah. Here’s an interesting one, Isaiah chapter 22. I don’t know if you’ve ever seen this one or not but it’s kind of fascinating. Isaiah knew about these things and spoke about them in kind of a cryptic way. We want to go to Isaiah 22 and start in verse 20***. “And it shall come o pass in that day, that I will call y servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:”*** Now look at your footnote 20a, *“Eliakim shall replace Shebna. Moreover, the symbolic name ‘Eliakim’ in ensuing verses* (meaning the verses coming up 21, 22 through 25*) becomes representative of the Messiah, the Savior, especially V 23-25. The name means ‘God shall cause to arise.’* So now, from verse 21, we’re talking about the son of a high priest that lived in the day of Isaiah but we’re talking about the Messiah. Notice what Isaiah says, ***“And I will cloth him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit they government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah*.”** Notice the key words robe and girdle. We’re talking temple things here. The robe and the girdle are always symbolic of a monarch who rules and reigns and sits on a throne. Look at 22***. “And the key of the house of David***” …look at your footnote down there, 22a. Priesthood, Keys; Sealing power… ***“And the key of the house of David*** ***will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”*** That is referencing the sealing power. Remember when the Savior said ‘I will give unto you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ When a person is made sure through Priesthood, here is something to remember, once you obtain this sureness as it pertains to Priesthood, you obtain the power to seal on earth and in heaven. It goes with it.

Now look at 23. ***“And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place;”*** having reference to the future crucifixion of the Savior, ***“And he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house.”*** *24.* ***“And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.”*** Now look at this, 25, ***“In that day,”*** Whenever to see Isaiah use that term ‘in that day’ ‘at that day’ or ‘at that time,’ it always has reference to the latter days***. “In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it.”*** It has reference to the Savior completing His perfect atonement. The burden that was upon Him was the burden of the sins of all mankind. Through the atonement, the ability of those sins to be erased, cut off, to be removed is complete through Christ’s perfect atonement. Notice the wording in verse 23, ‘I will fasten him as a nail in a *sure* place.’ Isn’t that wonderful? There’s some references to that, so every time you see that, the word ‘*sure*,’ or here’s another one; You’ll see the word ‘*assurance*’. ‘*Assurance*’ is another scriptural term and right smack in the middle of the word assurance is the word ‘sure.’ So the word *SURE* in gospel dynamics has a very deep and pointed meaning. It’s something that all of God’s children should seek to obtain through promises, covenants and endowments, should seek to obtain, so they can be made *sure* in this life. Once you have that *surety* in this life, brothers and sisters, here’s another mystery; Once you have that word used in your behalf while you’re in this life, you enter into something that the Lord calls ‘*the rest of the Lord*.’ You now have obtained the promises. There is no question concerning your standing. You have, with God Himself, obtained those promises and the assurance that when you leave this world, the Telestial mortal world, you will have an inheritance with Christ and the Father in the Celestial realms. So the word *sure* and *assurance*, *made sure, a more sure word*; all of these things point towards a state that the Lord refers to as ‘the rest of the Lord.’ If you want to look at that you can see a lot of that is spoken in Alma 11, 12 and 13 talks a lot about the ‘rest of the Lord.’ It’s mentioned in all of the scriptures. Any questions or comments on that? Does that make sense? Let’s go to another place.

Let’s go to Ether chapter 12. Let me show you another one. Now, another term is used in connection with all of these things. Somebody asked me just this last week, ‘What are you talking about, is it a part of this or is it a part of that?’ and they were seeing bits and pieces like a jigsaw puzzle set at a table. All of these terms, ‘the rest of the Lord,’ ‘the more sure word of prophecy,’ and ‘calling and election made sure;’ all of these things are describing the same place, the same position you want to obtain. They may be talking about ordinances that need to be performed, or something like that, but they are all talking about the same kind of a thing. Let’s go over to Ether 12:4 and it’s talking about HOPE. I want you to notice the words that are used*.* ***“Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God…”*** In the church when we talk about ‘hope’ there are two kinds of ‘*hope*.’ There’s the *hope* that the world talks about and then there’s the hope that the scriptures talk about. They are two different things. The *hope* that the world talks about really puts what you desire out of your control. In other words, ‘the Lord willing and if the creek don’t rise and if I’m a good boy and I do this and I do that then maybe THIS will happen. I *hope* it does.’ That’s not the *hope* the scriptures talk about because notice that the *hope* that the scriptures talk about have with it the word ‘*surety.*’ You ***“might with surety hope for a better world yea, even a place at the right hand of God.”*** Watch this, ***“which hope cometh of faith,”*** (now here we have some key words and I would circle them, surety, anchor, sure, steadfast***) “maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.”*** That is the greatest definition of *hope* anywhere in the scriptures.If you want to define *hope* that’s your best definition. So notice what the words are. This *hope* the Lord is talking about here, Moroni ties in the words surety, anchor, sure, and steadfast ***“always abounding in good works, and being led to glorify God***.” This *hope* is an insurance that you obtain. It’s a revelation from God who gives you a promise of a future inheritance. You obtain from God a promise of a future inheritance and as a result of that you obtain this *hope* that Moroni’s talking about. Now it’s hard for us to understand sometimes, because we have a different paradigm of *hope*. We have *hope* almost tied in with ‘wish’ and it’s not the same thing at all. This thing is there is because you have obtained a promise from God that He will not break, which is immutableand you are now at rest. You have no more concern for the welfare of your soul. All of these different things pull together and give you a little different feel for what we’re talking about here on these kinds of things. Now everything we’ve talked about for the last few weeks, about every lesson we’ve given, all are appendages the tie into this one thing. I had somebody this week that asked me if I would give some lessons on the signs of the last days. I said that I really didn’t want to do that because; I’ve taught those all my life by the way, and at one time the signs of the Second Coming were really important to me. Right now they are not that important to me because the things that change the human heart are more important to me than reading the signs of times. Is reading the signs of the times important? Sure it is. The Lord commands that we do that and to be watchful continually, but I’m more concerned, at this point, with how we can change the human heart to such a degree that that person becomes pure and then qualifies for all of the promises, all of the higher blessings of the gospel and the Melchizedek Priesthood. That’s much more important to me. There are a lot of people who read the signs both in and outside of the church. You can go on YouTube and put in the Signs of the Second Coming, Signs of the Last Days. You will see people that are very scripturally knowledgeable but they do not understand how to access the power of the Atonement of Christ so that the human heart can be changed, purified so that you can have your sins remitted. So, I rather than go there I’d rather continue to focus on these kinds of things.

Now there’s a couple of thoughts I wanted to give you on ‘sure’ and on ‘hope.’ In reality I don’t really have any more tonight, on this Father’s Day, than that right there. That’s all I wanted to share with you tonight. Comments?

Student: "I was always under the impression that crucifixion was mainly done by rope...that only Christ was the one with nails. I don't know where I got that idea.

Mike: Well the Romans were sure masters of it and they had it down to a fine art, but it was used by all ancient peoples. Can I just tell you that they crucified people sometimes by the thousands at a time. When you see the two thieves portrayed on the side of Christ, they usually want to take the crucifixion and show Christ crucified, but they show the two thieves tied up with ropes. That’s not true at all. It was a common form of execution. They have been known to line the sides of roads for miles with crucified persons to emphasize that you don’t come out in open rebellion against Rome. But lots of people crucified their people. Can I tell you that crucifixion is the form of death for the Atonement everywhere in eternity? Everywhere in eternity. That’s the form of death. Too be lifted up on a cross and killed in that manner has great symbolism. If you’ll look in 3rd Nephi 27:14, ***“I have been lifted up upon the cross so I will draw all men up unto me.”*** Joseph Smith taught that the Father of Jesus was a Savior and that He died for the sins of a world. If you look out and you see all saved things, if you believe in men and women who have been saved and exalted; they are called The Elohim. It has to be done through the Atonement sacrifice. There has to be an atoning one and crucifixion is the way that that’s done because of all the symbolism that involved in that form of death. Joseph Smith taught in the King Follett Discourse, that Jesus said, ‘I can only do what I’ve seen my Father do.’ And then Joseph Smith said, ‘Well, Jesus, what did you see your Father do?’ And he answers rhetorically, ‘I saw my Father lay down his life for the sins of the world and I do likewise.’ In another place Joseph taught that there never was a father that wasn’t first a son and there never was a son that didn’t have a father. So, there is a genealogy of Heavenly parents that go back endlessly. The process for them to become saved men and women in a Celestial world is the exact same process that we’re involved with here. There is no other way. That’s the pathway that all exalted men and women have trod before us and we’re following in their footsteps. So, brothers and sisters, unless you have any questions, that’ll be it.