

## A CONVERSATION BETWEEN ENOS AND A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DISCIPLE OF CHRIST-

John C. Pulver

The following is a fictional conversation between a 21<sup>st</sup> century disciple of Christ and the prophet Enos from the Book of Mormon who experienced mighty prayer. As a background to this conversation, you may want to read the book of Enos in the Book of Mormon which is 1 chapter in length.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Disciple:** What you have written in the Book of Mormon is short and concise, but with some detail about the experience you had with prayer when you went hunting in the forest. I have a feeling there is more to the story. Can you tell me more?

**Enos:** Well, yes; I suppose there could have been more written, but writing was difficult. What would you like to know?

**Disciple:** Basically, how did you manage to experience that kind of prayer? The most amount of time I have ever prayed at once was a little over 10 minutes and that was in one of my most desperate hours!

**Enos:** I really did not think I was going to experience things the way I did when I started that day in the forest. I had experienced praying before, as prayer was a regular experience growing up in the house of my father Jacob and encouraged. But something was different this time.... I was alone, I was in God's creations, and I had been given charge of the plates by my father Jacob and I was to put spiritual things upon them, so I was not sure if I was up to it. The counsel I had been given about my life and my relationship with God kept coming into my mind and I hit a pivotal point where I really wanted to know my standing with my maker. It was not like I knew exactly how to pray with the kind of intent and purpose that my record tells of. I just started and things happened over time.

**Disciple:** So, the words kept coming all day and into the night? How did you know what to say?

**Enos:** Not exactly. I suppose from my record it might seem like it was a constant flow of communication. It wasn't constant, I didn't talk all the time, and it was hard work! That is why I used the word struggle when I described it. I persisted in attempting to figure out what I needed to speak with the Lord about, and He definitely helped me! Over time, He kept putting things in my mind, or reminding me of things I needed to settle with Him. Once I began to feel the difference between His majesty and perfection and my mortal struggles, I got very concerned...and that is when I started praying for the welfare of my own soul!

**Disciple:** But how did you know what to pray about with your own life?

**Enos:** Well, you have heard stories where if people are drowning their whole life seems to pass before them? In a way, that experience is like a spiritual awareness. As I searched my soul for who I had been, who I was, who I wanted to be, what stopped me from being that person, the

mistakes I had made, the weaknesses I faced, how I treated others, and what I knew the Lord expected of me as revealed in the Plates of Brass and the teachings of my father and grandfather Nephi, I thought I better get it all out on the table before the Lord. The spirit kept revealing me to myself because I would not let go until I could feel Him cleansing me. I really did not like much of what I pled with the Lord about; it was uncomfortable, and I did not want to face it; but the more I faced myself with honesty the more peace I felt eventually. But was this more intense than any lecture or scolding I had ever received from my father Jacob or any other person? Absolutely. It was a thorough picture of me, with nothing held back. That is why it took some real time. The Lord also gently nudged and spoke to me like, “Don’t you think we need to talk about \_\_\_\_\_?”

**Disciple:** How did you muster up the courage to do that? You make it sound like you were on the witness stand in a courtroom!

**Enos:** One thing I have not mentioned in this process was how I felt so cradled in the arms of His love. Even though I called it a struggle, I could feel the gentleness and goodness of the Lord as we experienced this together. It did not seem to matter to Him what we talked about when looking at my life, only that I was honest. You must be honest with Him, because you have this sense and awareness that He speaks only the truth and sees things as they really are. There is no pretending with Him. I began to get a sense as I continued to pray and reach to Him of what Nephi meant when he said of his experience with obtaining the plates in Jerusalem that he was, “led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things he should do”. For me, I did not know what to say next, but the Lord helped me along by putting things in my mind.

**Disciple:** That would be a wonderful thing! There are things in my mind when I pray alright, but I think more they are thoughts that come bombarding in to distract me. It seems that at times I cannot keep focused.

**Enos:** So, you think that didn’t happen to me? I was constantly searching for the right thing to focus on, and that is part of the struggle. All the thoughts that come are not the important ones, so you must get rid of the dross so you can get down to what is really important. And again, there is a period of silence...even great periods, and that is where you learn to listen. For example, you live in the last dispensation, and that great Prophet of the Restoration, Joseph Smith, taught that if you pray in Spirit, you shall receive in Spirit. (D & C 46) That is what I was seeking and what prompted me forward.

**Disciple:** Your grandfather Lehi, when he partook of the fruit of the Tree of Life in his dream, said the first thing he wanted to do was share it with his family. It sounds like you also partook of the goodness of God, so is that why you did not stop just praying for yourself, but also prayed for your brethren the Nephites?

**Enos:** Yes. Something happened inside of me once I felt cleansed. It was joy, it was wholeness, a new sense of purpose, a vision for how I could help the Lord’s work, no more disconnection with God, no more sorrow for my sins and so much more! I wanted everyone I loved and all

those I knew to have these same feelings, and I knew the Lord could bring them into their lives if I prayed with enough faith to bring it about. Because I had more of the Spirit with me, I could see others more clearly and with a deeper love. I also could more easily feel God's love for them and His concerns. And as a result, all kinds of things came flooding into my mind.

**Disciple:** Like what kinds of things? I mean, I pray for my family members, for the missionaries, for blessings I seek, for the Prophet and others. I am wondering if I am missing something.

**Enos:** What is amazing and miraculous is how the Lord can help you discern what people need. He helps you see their lives with new eyes. He makes their future welfare your concern. Have you ever worried about someone you love? Have you ever truly desired what is best for them? Have you sensed how much they could help build the kingdom of God as they make certain choices? Have you sensed what holds them back? Do you know what they struggle with? Do you wonder how you could help bring them to the Lord? What really happens is you begin to experience a yearning for their welfare, and when that happens you realize that compared to the Lord you are powerless to bring anything about in their lives. This is when you can obtain certain assurances that the Lord is watching over them and will call to them so that they realize who they are, and what they can become. Once again you experience an awareness of the love and constant reaching of the Lord. As you get specific, He blesses your every specific concern.

**Disciple:** You say that you prayed for "the welfare of my people". That goes beyond just your extended family members and would take time. Did the Lord teach you anything during this part of the experience?

**Enos:** My people the Nephites were all at various levels spiritually, socially, in their maturity and in their ability to get along well together. I had to pray for the gift of forgiveness for difficult circumstances I had been in, for what people had sometimes said to me, for how I had not always been included but was shunned by some, and many more disappointing things that had happened. I could not always get the support from the very people you would think would love me and lift me up. It was not easy being the Prophet's son because some people did not like what he said, and some said that I thought I was better than everyone else. I was often judged harshly by others. Some relatives said I acted entitled. I was often sad, disappointed, and sometime angry. I had to admit all of this to the Lord, and He had to soften my heart. I needed to let it go and learn to see my fellow brethren as God saw them. It was hard to feel love for all of them because what they had said and done made it exceedingly difficult at times. I really struggled with settling myself with all of it, but the Lord said I needed to put my feelings behind me so I could be a blessing to them. I said I did not know how to do this. He said to give the anger and the hurt over to Him, so I did, and I felt better, but there were many hours of honest struggling with myself before I could feel these things clear away and peace fill my heart.

**Disciple:** That sounds amazing, and I think I could use that kind of experience with some people I have come in contact with that I don't call my enemies, but not necessarily my friends either—more like my peers and those I have to pass through life with. You tell next of praying for your 'enemies', which I can see now you would never be able to do very effectively unless you had

removed some of the hurt from those who you would expect to treat you well. Weren't you pretty exhausted by this point, and when you felt impressed to pray for your enemies, did you say to the Lord, "Not today, please; let's do it another day?"

**Enos:** Honestly, it took every ounce of energy I could muster to pray for those who I knew wished me harm, who had harmed or killed some of my friends, some of my extended family, and who were a daily thorn in my side! I found in speaking with the Lord that I had shut them out of my mind and put them in a dark corner where they couldn't be thought about, but to my horror that dark corner also housed my feelings about them, what they had done, what they might do, and the unfairness of it all. I had at least tried to keep the commandments and honor God. Why did I have to deal with these people, who by now could only be described as dark and loathsome? Couldn't I just let them be where they chose to be and go on with my life? Not so said the Spirit, as you need to get this thorn out of your side. Are you ready to go to work?

**Disciple:** So, what did you say? Didn't you want to simply remind the Lord that your standing with Him was settled, that you possessed a love deeper than ever for your family and friends and fellow man, those in the kingdom, and those who chose to honor God? What possible benefit could there be to compel you to face those enemies of your soul, and those who desired to harm you physically?

**Enos:** The Lord taught me it was not so hard to love those who treat you well even though they are sometimes imperfect in their relationship with you. There is something that is much harder. He helped me to see there was a canker left in my soul, a deep dark cavern that needed cleaning out. This was where the explosion of emotion occurred. I wanted to shrink from the presence of the Lord because of feelings that came flooding out. The Lord gently and with encouragement listened as anger, rage, hurt, fear, revenge, hatred and judgment came pouring out like lava out of a volcano! I could not give all of it voice or words so it all just pierced through my body as tears streamed down my face in agony. I did not want to feel all of this! The Spirit said that now it is out it can be taken from you, so you don't have to carry it any longer. I cried out for mercy from the Lord, and He filled me with His love, and with His love with me, I could feel His love for those who my feelings were about. It was a beginning point, and rather than feeling that exhaustion you mentioned before, I felt exhilaration, strength, and a sense of being encircled about in the arms of His love. It was beyond anything I could ever imagine. And I was free! Free of reaction, free to feel, free to treat them in new ways in my mind and heart.

**Disciple:** It sounds like you had to step into the depths of hell, so you wouldn't have to go there again? After experiencing that, the dark place did not exist for you anymore?

**Enos:** No, not as much. I was now free to pray for their welfare, even though I knew the prophecies would eventually come true for many of them. I could still pray with hope, with love, and without malice. It was a miracle! And the beautiful thing about it was that I knew it was a gift from God, as of myself I could not have ever arrived at this place and feel what I now felt. And so, I prayed on- praying that despite using agency in ways that were destructive to themselves

and others, that the Lord would be merciful to them, as He had been with me. I desired with all my heart for them to also feel the peace I then felt.

**Disciple:** So, what was the significance of this prayer experience to the rest of your life? And how can I have this kind of experience in my life?

**Enos:** What I learned there, and what I was cleansed from, became the foundation for all my service thereafter. I was never the same again. My communions with the Lord from that day forward were shorter, but with a depth of connection which sustained me in all my trials, challenges, joys and service.

My young friend and fellow disciple of Christ, you live in a different time and place. The same God who cleansed me and elevated me to a new place can do so for you. Do you now somewhat understand the price you will need to pay? Will you need to go to a forest as I did? Probably not. The Spirit of the Lord can take you anywhere you need to go in your prayers. You will need to free yourself from distractions though, and you must pray for courage to face everything inside that needs rooting out. This is such a daunting task! But I testify to you it is worth it, and Jesus will sustain you. Do not shrink from the task, as you have a mission to perform as I did also. Keep reaching up and He will reach down to lift you up. It was wonderful visiting with you, and I hope I was able to be helpful with your questions. You are lucky to live in the Latter-days. We all saw your day and rejoiced in it.

**-John C. Pulver- 2020**