

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 38:

“Old Things Are Done Away, and All Things Have Become New”

(3 Nephi 12-15)

LESSON GOAL: To encourage us to be true disciples of Jesus Christ by following His example and by living the higher law that He taught to the Nephites.

1. Jesus teaches the Beatitudes to the Nephites.

The Beatitudes set the standard for the higher law, introduced a new dispensation of truth, and taught more about true discipleship than any other passages of scripture. Rather than being isolated statements, the Beatitudes are interrelated and progressive in their arrangement and teaches more about true discipleship than any other passage of scripture.

Brad Constantine: “The Sermon on the Mount is the most significant “testimony” of our Lord ever recorded. **It is a blueprint for exaltation because it bears witness of the Savior’s celestial character.** It is an invitation from the Redeemer of all mankind to “Come watch me. Listen to my words. Do what you see me do. Learn of me, and receive eternal life.” **In this magnificent sermon, the Savior taught the Nephites about his magnificent character and what it really means to become “even as He is and adds much light and understanding to what Jesus really taught.”** (LDS Gospel Doctrine.com, Lesson 38).

Harold B. Lee: “Christ came not only into the world to make an atonement for the sins of mankind but to set an example before the world of the standard of perfection of God’s law and of obedience to the Father. In his Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of his own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be an ‘autobiography, every syllable of which he had written down in deeds,’ and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives. . . . **May you make the Beatitudes the constitution of your own lives and thus receive the blessedness promised therein**” (*Stand Ye In Holy Places*, 341-342, 348).

The Lord gave four beatitudes to the Nephites before beginning the well-known Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12:

1. “Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve. . . that they may baptize you with water; . . . and with fire and with the Holy Ghost” (3 Ne. 12:1)
2. “Blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized” (3 Ne. 12:1)
3. “More blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me” (3 Ne. 12:2)
4. “Blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost” (3 Ne. 12:2)

Reuben Clark, Jr.: “There are two kinds of testimony, one which comes from the senses, the eye, the ear, the touch. So far as I am concerned, because I know how uncertain is the eye and the ear and the touch, **I have felt that the other testimony, the testimony of the Spirit, was for me the truer one...And that is the testimony...which must come to most of us, the testimony of believing without seeing...And this testimony is the testimony of the Spirit.** We should all seek for it. If the Lord wishes to add the testimony of the senses, we should be grateful; but the testimony of the spirit is within the call of all of us. **All we need to do to get it is to live for it and seek it; and that testimony when it comes will be in us a burning testimony, a testimony that will be as a fire, if we so live that we keep it”** (*Improvement Era*, Aug. 1949, 495, 539-540).

Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. – 3 Ne. 12:3

Jeffrey R. Holland: “...the Book of Mormon sermon added the phrase ‘who come unto me...’ Obviously in the 3 Nephi rendering, **being poor in spirit is not in itself a virtue**, but it will be so if such humility brings one to claim the blessings of the kingdom through the waters of baptism, making covenants, and moving toward all the promises given to covenant-making disciples. **It is significant that the phrase ‘come unto me’ is used at least four more times in the twenty or so verses that follow this one”** (*Christ And The New Covenant*, 263).

And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. – 3 Ne. 12:4

Gordon B. Hinckley: “With many of you there is the gnawing pain of bereavement and fear. **We know there are many days of loneliness and nights of longing.** But there is also that which comes from Him who said, ‘I, even I, am he that comforteth you’ (Isa. 51:12). **The Lord is your strength.** He is available to you, and **when invited, by His Spirit He will come to you.** You too have great talents to enrich the lives of others. You will find comfort and strength as you lose yourself in their service. Your own troubles will be forgotten as you help others with theirs. **Your burdens will become lighter as you lift the burdens of the downtrodden and the oppressed”** (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, “Widows and Widowers”).

Robert E. Wells: “Since mourning is so universal, the Lord must have a purpose for having us experience it. There is no doubt but that **he softens and molds us, touches us most deeply when we are mourning”** (*Mount and the Master*, 20).

And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. – 3 Ne. 12:5

Gordon B. Hinckley: “Meekness implies a spirit of gratitude as opposed to an attitude of self-sufficiency, an acknowledgment of a greater power beyond oneself, a recognition of God, and an acceptance of his commandments. This is the beginning of wisdom. Walk with gratitude before him who is the giver of life and every good gift” (“With All Thy Getting Get Understanding,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1988, 3–4).

Neal A. Maxwell: “Human suffering does not automatically produce sweetness and character unless meekness is present. Meekness is the mulch that must go in the soil of adversity in order **for empathy to grow** and in order **for character to grow**. **Jesus could not have become the most empathetic person had he not been the most meek person.**” (Cory H. Maxwell, *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, 209).

And blessed are *all* they *who* do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled *with the Holy Ghost*. – 3 Ne. 12:6

Robert E. Wells: “How many people strive for higher spiritual levels as though they truly hungered and thirsted after them? **To hunger and thirst for something involves strife, struggles, work, sacrifice, and a host of other efforts**...Perhaps you have heard the story of the philosopher who held a young disciple’s head under water until the latter gasped for air. The philosopher then told the disciple, ‘When you want knowledge as much as you wanted air while you were under water, you are ready to study with me. The highest blessings of the gospel are not for the **faint-hearted, coolly rational**, theoretical philosopher, nor for the person who is merely **intellectually curious**. **Those great blessings are reserved for stouthearted souls who hunger and thirst for greater personal righteousness and who are willing to pay the price to achieve it**” (*The Mount and the Master*, 42-3).

And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. – 3 Ne. 12:7

Harold B. Lee: “Our salvation rests upon the mercy we show to others. Unkind and cruel words, or wanton acts of cruelty toward man or beast, even though in seeming retaliation, **disqualify the perpetrator in his claims for mercy when he has need of mercy** in the day of judgment before earthly or heavenly tribunals. Is there one who has never been wounded by the slander of another whom he thought to be his friend? Do you remember the struggle you had to refrain from retribution? Blessed are all you who are merciful, for you shall obtain mercy!” (*Stand Ye In Holy Places*, 347).

And blessed are *all* the pure in heart, for they shall see God. – 3 Ne. 12:8

****Dallin H. Oaks:** “**The issue is not what we have *done* but what we have *become***. And what we have become is the result of more than our actions. **It is also the result of our attitudes, our motives, and our desires**. Each of these is an ingredient of the pure heart...**To become pure in heart--to achieve exaltation--we must alter our attitudes and priorities to a condition of spirituality, we must control our thoughts, we must reform our motives, and we must perfect our desires**” (*Pure in Heart*, 139-40).

And blessed are *all* the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. – 3 Ne. 12:9

Bruce R. McConkie: “**The gospel of peace makes men!** Christ came to bring peace--peace on earth and good will to men. His gospel gives peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. He is the Prince of peace. . .Let there be peace on earth, and **let it begin with his saints**. By this shall all men know the Lord's disciples: They are peacemakers; they seek to compose difficulties; they hate war and love peace; they invite all men to forsake evil, overcome the world, flee from avarice and greed, stand in holy places, and receive for themselves that peace which passeth understanding, that **peace which comes only by the power of the Spirit**” (*The Mortal Messiah*, 2, 123).

And blessed are *all* they *who* are persecuted *for my name's sake*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. – 3 Ne. 12:10

Joseph Smith: “Those who cannot endure persecution, and stand in the day of affliction, cannot stand in the day when the Son of God shall burst the veil, and appear in all the glory of His Father, with all the holy angels” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 42).

And blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. – 3 Ne. 12:11

Harold B. Lee: “**To be persecuted for righteousness' sake in a great cause where truth and virtue and honor are at stake is God-like**. Always there have been martyrs to every great cause. The great harm that may come from persecution is not from the persecution itself but from the possible effect it may have upon the persecuted who may thereby be deterred in their zeal for the righteousness of their cause. Much of that persecution comes from lack of understanding, for men are prone to oppose that which they do not comprehend. Some of it comes from men intent upon evil. **But from whatever cause, persecution rages against those engaged in a righteous cause**. May youth everywhere remember that warning when you are hissed and scoffed at because you refuse to compromise your standards of abstinence, honesty, and morality in order to win the applause of the crowd. **If you stand firmly for the right, despite the jeers of the crowd or even physical violence, you shall be crowned with the blessedness of eternal joy.**” (*Stand Ye In Holy Places*, 348).

Marvin J. Ashton: “The best and most clear indicator that we are progressing spiritually and coming unto Christ is **the way we treat other people**” (*Ensign*, May 1992, 20)..

For ye shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you. – 3 Ne. 12:12

D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner: “Peter wrote, ‘If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled’ (1 Peter 3:14). **Being persecuted while bearing the name of Jesus Christ and while trying to be Christ-like is nothing new.** It has happened to many people greater than we throughout the ages. Paul wrote, ‘All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution’ (2 Timothy 3:12). And we will be blessed for it. How do we endure the painful persecution? ‘He also gave them strength, that they should suffer no manner of afflictions, save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ’ (Alma 31:38). (*Verse by Verse: The Book of Mormon*, V2:147-48).

2. Jesus declares that His followers are to be the salt of the earth and a light to other people.

I give unto you to be the salt of the earth – 3 Ne. 12:13

Bruce R. McConkie: “Among the ancient Hebrews *salt* ... was used as a preservative, in seasoning food, and in all animal sacrifices. (Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24; Mark 9:49–50) So essential was it to the sacrificial ordinance that **it was the symbol of the covenant made between God and His people** in connection with that sacred performance. (Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5.) “Accordingly, our Lord’s statement, made first to the Jews and then to the Nephites, that they had power ‘to be the *salt of the earth*,’ takes on great significance. ... **They had power, in other words, to be the seasoning, savoring, preserving influence in the world, the influence which would bring peace and blessings to all others”** (*Mormon Doctrine*, 667–68).

Carlos E. Asay: “A world-renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. **Savor is lost through mixture and contamination.** Similarly, priesthood power does not dissipate with age; it, too, is lost through mixture and contamination. When a young man or older man mixes his thoughts with graphic literature, he suffers a loss of savor. When a priesthood bearer mixes his speech with lies or profanity, he suffers a loss of savor. When one of us follows the crowd and becomes involved in immoral acts and the use of drugs, tobacco, he loses savor” (*Conf. Report*, April 1980).

I give unto you to be the light of this people – 3 Ne. 12:14

Franklin D. Richards: “Our light should not be hid under the bed or under a bushel, but it ought to be lit up here in these mountains, and it must shine so that this whole nation shall see it. And all nations must see and have a chance of accepting or rejecting the Gospel. We must fraternize with them, as far as is right and proper, so that we may show them the excellency there is in the knowledge of God...”

“Now, then, we ought to understand that our labors and our conduct individually and collectively are open before the world, our conduct and attitude should be according to the dignity of our position, **that the nations of the earth may see and know we are true to our God, to our professions of faith, and that we are honestly pushing forward the kingdom of God.** This should be the spirit of the whole people. **We should be ready to make any sacrifice, and discharge every obligation necessary for the advancement of His kingdom”** (*Collected Discourses*, Vol.1, April 8, 1888).

Whosoever is angry with his brother (without a cause) shall be in danger of his judgment – 3 Ne. 12:22

James Allen: “Circumstance does not make the man; it reveals him to himself. Every sin is preceded by a sinful thought, which is preceded by a sinful desire. **Desires, then, become the defining characteristic of one’s spiritual integrity.** However, concerning some sins, **the Law of Moses restricted one’s action but said nothing of one’s thoughts or desires.** The higher law teaches that evil thoughts and desires are just as destructive. **Therefore, the anger, which encourages the premeditation, which prompts the murder, must be condemned.** (*MOF*, 105)

3. Jesus declares that He has fulfilled the law of Moses. He teaches the people a higher law.

The Savior fulfilled the law of Moses when He atoned for our sins. After His Atonement, the people were no longer commanded to make animal sacrifices, required as part of the law of Moses to point toward the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Instead, the people were commanded to “offer for a sacrifice ... a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 9:19-20).

After Jesus declared that He had fulfilled the law of Moses, He gave the Nephites a higher law in 3 Nephi 12:

THE LAW OF MOSES

- v. 21: Thou shalt not **kill**
- v. 27: Thou shalt not commit **adultery**
- v. 31: whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of **divorcement**.
- v. 33: Thou shalt not **forswear** [swear falsely] thyself
- v. 38: **An eye for an eye**, and a tooth for a tooth
- v. 43: Thou shalt love thy neighbor, **hate thine enemy**

THE HIGHER LAW

- v. 22 whosoever is **angry** with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment.
- v. 28: whosoever **looketh** on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart.
- v.32: whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, **causeth her to commit adultery**
- v. 34: **Swear not at all**
- v. 42: **Give to him that asketh** thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away.
- v. 44: **Love your enemies**, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you

Love your enemies – 3 Ne. 12:44

Spencer W. Kimball: “Why does the Lord ask you to love your enemies and to return good for evil? That you might have the benefit of it. **It does not injure the one you hate so much when you hate a person...but the hate and the bitterness canker your unforgiving heart**” (*Faith Precedes The Miracle*, 191).

When thou prayest thou shalt not do as the hypocrites – 3 Ne. 13:5

Charles W. Penrose: “Now, prayer is that which comes from the heart, the sincere sentiment, the secret feeling, which ascends to our Father and which He, who sees in secret, will reward openly. It is not a multitude of words and repetitions that is pleasing to the Lord, but **the earnest desire of a humble heart**. And this will be answered, no matter how broken or ungrammatical the language may be. On the other hand, no matter how flowery the language of the petition may be, **if it does not convey the feelings of the heart, it is not true prayer**” (*Collected Discourses*, vol. 2, Mar. 22, 1891)

If ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses – 3 Ne. 13:15

Jeffrey R. Holland: “Life is too short to be spent nursing animosities or in keeping a box score of offenses against us... **We don’t want God to remember our sins, so there is something fundamentally wrong in our relentlessly trying to remember those of others**. When we have been hurt, undoubtedly God takes into account what wrongs were done to us and what provocations there are for our resentments, but clearly the more provocation there is and the more excuse we can find for our hurt, all the more reason for us to forgive and be delivered from the destructive hell of such poisonous venom and anger. It is one of those ironies of godhood that in order to find peace, **the offended as well as the offender must engage the principle of forgiveness**.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 83).

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged – 3 Ne. 14:2

Spencer W. Kimball: “The scriptures are very strict upon the unauthorized judging. **The Lord will judge with the same measurements meted out by us**. If we are harsh, we should not expect other than harshness. **The Lord will do the judging in the final analysis. ...The Lord can judge men by their thoughts as well as by what they say and do**, for he knows even the intents of their hearts; but this is not true of humans. We hear what people say, we see what they do, but **being unable to discern what they think or intend, we often judge wrongfully**” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 267-8).

4. Jesus teaches the Nephites how they must live to be His true disciples.

C.S. Lewis: “**The command Be ye perfect is not idealistic gas**. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command. If we let Him — for we can prevent Him, if we choose—**He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly**, His own boundless power and delight and goodness. **The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what he said**” (*Mere Christianity*, 172-175).

Russell M. Nelson: “Papaderos, a Greek philosopher, ended a lecture asking, “Are there any questions?” I asked. “Dr. Papaderos, **what is the meaning of life?**” Laughter followed. Papaderos held up his hand, stilled the room, and looked at me for a long time. “I will answer your question.” Taking his wallet out of his hip pocket, he fished out **a quarter-sized round mirror** and said: “When I was a small child, during the war, I found the broken pieces of a mirror from a wrecked German motorcycle. I kept only this largest piece. By scratching it on a stone, I made it round. I played with it as a toy and was fascinated that **I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine**—in deep holes, crevices, dark closets. It became a game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find. I kept the little mirror.

“As I became a man, I grew to understand that **this was a metaphor for what I might do with my life. I am not the light or the source of light. But light—truth, understanding, knowledge—is there, and it will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it**. I am a fragment of a mirror **who can reflect light into the dark places of this world—into the black places in the hearts of men—and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. This is the meaning of my life.**” And then he took his small mirror and reflected the bright rays of daylight onto my face and onto my hands folded on the desk” (Robert Fulghum, *It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It*).

Joseph Fielding McConkie & Robert L. Millet: “**We are perfect when we are whole, fully formed, finished**. The word finished is most important here. We cannot, through discipline and self-will, be perfect in the sense that we are finished. **We cannot conquer the flesh, overcome the trials and tribulations and sins of this world, on our own. We become finished only in and through Christ**. His grace is a divinely given enabling power, **a sacred source of strength which enables us to accomplish what we could never accomplish on our own**” (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4:78).

Bruce R. McConkie: “**You don’t have to live a life that’s truer than true**. You don’t have to have an excessive zeal that becomes fanatical and becomes unbalancing. **What you have to do is stay in the mainstream of the Church and live as upright, decent people—loving the Lord**, keeping the commandments, paying your tithing, serving in organizations of the Church, staying on the straight and narrow path. If you’re on that path when death comes, you’ll never fall off from it, and, for all practical purposes, your calling and election is made sure” (“Probationary Test of Mortality,” 8).

Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up (3 Ne 18:24)

May we come unto Christ, follow Him, and reflect His light in the hearts of those around us.”