

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 28: “The Word Is in Christ unto Salvation” (Alma 32-25)

LESSON GOAL: To help us understand that the word of God will lead us to Jesus Christ and to encourage us to “nourish the word” in our hearts (Alma 32:40).

1. Alma teaches the humble Zoramites to exercise faith and give place in their hearts for the word of God.

The Zoramites had perverted the ways of the Lord in Alma 31:

- They did not observe the law of Moses (v9).
- They had forsaken daily prayer (v10).
- They built synagogues for the purpose of worshipping one day a week (v12).
- They built a prayer stand from which they offered the same prayer (v13-18).
- They believed God was and would always be a spirit (v15).
- They believed the fundamental beliefs of the Nephites were false (v16).
- They believed there would be no Christ (v16).
- They believed they were chosen to be the elect of God (v16-17).

Bruce R. McConkie: “Faith is based on truth and is preceded by knowledge. Until a person gains a knowledge of the truth, he can have no faith. Alma said, ‘Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things’ (Alma 32:21) Thus faith is a hope in that which is not seen which is true, and accordingly it can enter the heart of man only after he has received the truth” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 262).

President Ezra Taft Benson: “The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness . . . “God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. Alma said, ‘Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble.’ (Alma 32:16.) “Let us choose to be humble by conquering enmity toward our brothers and sisters, esteeming them as ourselves, and lifting them as high or higher than we are. We can choose to humble ourselves by receiving counsel and chastisement. We can choose to humble ourselves by forgiving those who have offended us. We can choose to humble ourselves by rendering selfless service. We can choose to humble ourselves by going on missions and preaching the word that can humble others. We can choose to humble ourselves by getting to the temple more frequently. We can choose to humble ourselves by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God. We can choose to humble ourselves by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives. Let us choose to be humble. We can do it. I know we can” (*Conference Report*, May 1989, 6).

2. Alma teaches the people to nourish the word of God in their hearts.

Henry B. Eyring: “Just as soil needs preparation for a seed, so does a human heart for the word of God to take root. Before he told the people to plant the seed, Alma told them that their hearts were prepared. They had been persecuted and cast out of their churches. Alma with his love and the circumstances of their lives, which led them to be humble, had prepared them. They were then ready to hear the word of God. If they chose to plant it in their hearts, the growth in their souls would surely follow, and that would increase their faith” (*To Draw Closer to God*, 186).

President Spencer W. Kimball: “The exercising of faith is a willingness to accept without total regular proof and to move forward and perform works. ‘Faith without works is dead’ (James 2:26), and a dead faith will not lead one to move forward to adjust a life or to serve valiantly. A real faith pushes one forward to constructive and beneficial acts as though he knew in absoluteness” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 71).

Gordon B. Hinckley: “Far more of us need to awake and arouse our faculties to an awareness of the great everlasting truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each of us can do a little better than we have been doing. We can be a little more kind. We can be a little more merciful. We can be a little more forgiving. We can put behind us our weaknesses of the past, and go forth with new energy and increased resolution to improve the world about us, in our homes, in our places of employment, in our social activities. We have work to do, you and I, so very much of it. Let us roll up our sleeves and get at it, with a new commitment, putting our trust in the Lord.” (*Church News*, 04/08/95)

3. Alma cites prophets’ testimonies of Jesus Christ and exhorts the people to plant the word of God in their hearts.

M. Russell Ballard: “... That is all anyone can ask you to do: to ‘experiment’ upon the words of Christ, to ‘give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart’ and to not ‘resist the Spirit of the Lord.’ It is my sincere belief that if you will do those things and ask Heavenly Father in prayer if they are true, He will tell you. That is His promise to you and to all of His children. . . Please don’t let this opportunity to receive personal revelation from God pass. Hold fast to all that you know to be true and add to that the fulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Take into account what you’ve felt as you’ve read these words. Then put it all to the ultimate test: Ask God. Listen for His answer with your heart, then respond to what you feel” (*Our Search For Happiness*, 123).

Certain fundamental principles will cause this experiment with the seed to work.

1. The first is **humility**. We must be “truly penitent” (Alma 32:7).
2. We must **recognize that God wants us to believe** (Alma 32:22).
3. **God gives his word** to men women and even little children (Alma 32:23).
4. We cannot **know the truth of things** unto perfection in the **beginning of our efforts** (Alma 32:26).
5. We must **awake, give place** in our hearts to plant the seed and *give place* for it in our busy lives (Alma 32:27).

These principles suggested by Alma and Amulek teach us how to exercise faith and are also seeds, which, if given place and planted and nourished in our lives will bring forth the fruit of eternal life.

1. **Pray** (Alma 33:3-11; 34:18-27)
2. **Believe and read the scriptures** (Alma 33:12-18; 34:30)
3. **Look to Christ and make him the focus of our lives** (Alma 33:19-23; Alma 34:5-10)
4. **Exercise “faith unto REPENTANCE** (Alma 34:14-17, 30)
5. **Give charitable service** (Alma 34:28,29)
6. **Be humble, give thanksgiving daily, pray continually, have patience, bear** all manner of afflictions, (Alma 34:37-41)
7. **Nourish the tree** springing up in you unto everlasting life, that your burdens may be light (Alma 33:23)

4. Amulek testifies of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He commands the people to pray and exercise faith unto repentance.

Neal A. Maxwell: “My friends and neighbors, brothers and sisters all, **the most important question** in human history is one which will not go away. It echoes down the corridors of time. **And “Jesus asked them...What think ye of Christ?”** (Matt 22:42) Sooner or later, this is the vital question for all mortals, including your, my friends. **And a failure to answer this question is an answer**” (Investigator Fireside, Jan. 5, 1984).

Stephen R. Robinson: “Life, like a computer, has default settings, conditions that will automatically apply unless we take positive action to avoid them. Thus, if we refuse to make Christ our Lord by taking positive steps to enter into his covenant, then Satan becomes our lord by default. **Christ by choice or Satan by default—there are no other options.**

“**Christ ‘shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety.’** (Alma 34:15-16.) **The choice before us is mercy or justice.** Either choice can be accommodated, and either choice is compatible with the nature and plan of God, but, as in the choice between the Lord and Satan, **there are no third alternatives.** Again, life has default settings, and they are set for justice. **We can choose the mercy that is offered through the gospel covenant, but if we refuse that mercy, we will receive justice**” (*Believing Christ*, 60).

Gordon B. Hinckley: “**Be prayerful. You can’t do it alone.** You know that. You cannot make it alone and do your best. **You need the help of the Lord . . .** and the marvelous thing is that you have the opportunity to pray, with the expectation that your prayers will be heard and answered. . . Be prayerful. **Ask the Lord to forgive your sins.** Ask the Lord for help. Ask the Lord to bless you. Ask the Lord to help you realize your righteous ambitions. . . . Ask the Lord for all of the important things that mean so much to you in your lives. He stands ready to help. **Don’t ever forget it.**” (Colorado Springs Young Adult Meeting, April 14, 1996)

Russell M. Nelson: “Each of us prepares for future exigencies with life insurance, wills, trusts, and all that may be needed to organize business affairs. Time is both fleeting and precious. **We who tarry here have a few vanishing moments remaining to prepare to meet God. Unfinished business is our worst business. Perpetual procrastination must yield to perceptive preparation**” (*The Gateway We Call Death*, 104-5).

Ezra Taft Benson: “**Some people intend to make a decision and then never get around to it... They intend to paint the barn, to fix the fence, to haul away that old machinery or remove that old shed, but the time of decision just never arrives.** Some of us face a similar situation in our personal lives... **We intend to pay a full tithing, to begin keeping the Word of Wisdom, to make our initial home teaching visits early** in the month. However, without **actual decision** followed by **implementation**, the weeks and months go by and **nothing is accomplished. We could drift into eternity on these kinds of good intentions**” (*God, Family, Country*, 389).

5. Conclusion

David O. McKay: “An outstanding doctrine of the Church is that **each individual carries the responsibility to work out his own salvation, and salvation is a process of gradual development. The Church does not accept the doctrine that a mere murmured belief in Jesus Christ is all that is necessary.** A man may say he believes, but if he does nothing to make that belief or faith a **moving power to do, to accomplish, to produce soul growth, his professing will avail him nothing.** To work out one’s salvation is not to sit idly by dreaming and yearning for God miraculously to thrust bounteous blessings into our laps. **It is to perform daily, hourly, momentarily, if necessary, the immediate task or duty at hand, and to continue happily in such performance** as the years come and go, leaving the fruits of such labors either for self or for others to be bestowed as a just and beneficent Father may determine” (*Conference Report*, April 1957, 7).

Boyd K. Packer: "Faith, to be faith, must center around something that is not known. Faith, to be faith, must go beyond that for which there is confirming evidence. Faith, to be faith, must go into the unknown. Faith, to be faith, must walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness. If everything has to be known, if everything has to be explained, if everything has to be certified, then there is no need for faith. Indeed, there is no room for it" (*Improvement Era*, November 1968, 62).