

Come Follow Me Podcast
Elo Viz production
Week 19
Mosiah 7-10

In the October General Conference of 1995 President Boyd K. Packer shared this story.

“In April of 1847, Brigham Young led the first company of pioneers out of Winter Quarters. At that same time, sixteen hundred miles to the west the pathetic survivors of the Donner Party straggled down the slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains into the Sacramento Valley.

They had spent the ferocious winter trapped in the snowdrifts below the summit. That any survived the days and weeks and months of starvation and indescribable suffering is almost beyond belief.

Among them was fifteen-year-old John Breen. On the night of April 24 he walked into Johnson’s Ranch. Years later John wrote:

“It was long after dark when we got to Johnson’s Ranch, so the first time I saw it was early in the morning. The weather was fine, the ground was covered with green grass, the birds were singing from the tops of the trees, and the journey was over. I could scarcely believe that I was alive.

“The scene that I saw that morning seems to be photographed on my mind. Most of the incidents are gone from memory, but I can always see the camp near Johnson’s Ranch.”

At first I was very puzzled by his statement that “most of the incidents are gone from memory.” How could long months of incredible suffering and sorrow ever be gone from his mind? How could that brutal dark winter be replaced with one brilliant morning?

On further reflection I decided it was not puzzling at all. I have seen something similar happen to people I have known. I have seen some who have spent a long winter of guilt and spiritual starvation emerge into the morning of forgiveness.

When morning came, they learned this:

“Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.””

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1995/10/the-brilliant-morning-of-forgiveness?lang=eng>

I was reminded of this story when I came across this verse this week in our studying. This is in Mosiah 7:33

“But if ye will **turn** to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all **diligence** of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage.”

You see, one thing is for certain: Every single person who has ever, and will ever live on this earth will face trials, struggles and hardships. Ranging from the smallest annoyance to the largest tragedies. The key to success in life is how we handle these situations when they come.

In the April Conference of 2010 Donald L Hallstrom shared this story:

“Many years ago, I observed a heartbreak—which became a tragedy. A young couple was nearing the delivery of their first child. Their lives were filled with the anticipation and excitement of this monumental experience. During the delivery, complications arose and the baby died. Heartbreak turned to grief, grief turned to anger, anger turned to blame, and blame turned to revenge toward the doctor, whom they held fully responsible. Parents and other family members became heavily involved, together seeking to ruin the reputation and the career of the physician. As weeks and then months of acrimony consumed the family, their bitterness was extended to the Lord. “How could He allow this horrible thing to occur?” They rejected the repeated efforts of Church leaders and members to spiritually and emotionally comfort them and, in time, disassociated themselves from the Church. Four generations of the family have now been affected. Where once there was faith and devotion to the Lord and His Church, there has been no spiritual activity by any family member for decades.

The Prophet Joseph Smith provided a model in handling personal tragedy and opposition. Revealed to him while in the inhumane surroundings of the Liberty Jail was this divine direction (which, in part, was a description of Joseph’s life to that point and also a forewarning): If “fools shall have thee in derision, ... if thou art called to pass through tribulation; ... if thine enemies fall upon thee; ... if thou

shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, ... and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:1, 5–7). Then the profound statement: “The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?” (verse 8). This is followed by clear direction and great promises. “Therefore, hold on thy way, and ... fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever”

Over the ensuing years, Joseph Smith continued to righteously endure a life full of adversity. He offered this faith-filled perspective: “And as for the perils which I am called to pass through, they seem but a small thing to me. ... Deep water is what I am wont to swim in. ... I ... glory in tribulation; for ... God ... [has] delivered me out of them all, and will deliver me from henceforth” (D&C 127:2). Joseph’s confidence in overcoming constant opposition was based on his ability to continually turn to the Lord.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2010/04/turn-to-the-lord?lang=eng>

What a model of confidence in how we are to respond when we face something hard in our lives. We can pursue bitterness and anger towards the situation and towards God, or we can turn to the Creator of the Universe and ask what it is we are supposed to learn from this experience. And, Isn’t that where Joy is found? My wife and I have had a sign hanging in our house for years that says: “The climb can be hard, but the view is always better from the top.” And really it is our faithful effort that makes the view so worth it when we reach the top of the mountain.

I love President Uchtdorf’s talk in this last General Conference. He talked about this very subject. He said:

“It probably goes without saying that everyone wants to be happy. Nevertheless, it also goes without saying that not everyone is happy. Sadly, it seems that for many people, happiness is hard to find.

Why is that? If happiness is the one thing we humans desire most, why are we so unsuccessful at finding it? To paraphrase a country song, maybe we’ve been looking for joy in all the wrong places.

We're saying that God has something more to give. A higher and more profound joy—a joy that transcends anything this world offers. It is a joy that endures heartbreak, penetrates sorrow, and diminishes loneliness.

Worldly happiness, by contrast, does not last. It cannot. It is the nature of all earthly things to grow old, decay, wear out, or become stale. But godly joy is eternal, because God is eternal. Jesus Christ came to lift us out of the temporal and replace corruption with incorruption. Only He has that power, and only His joy is perpetual.

Jesus taught, "Seek, and ye shall find."

I believe this simple phrase is not only a spiritual promise; it is a statement of fact.

If we seek reasons to be angry, to doubt, to be bitter or alone, we will find them too.

However, if we seek joy—if we look for reasons to rejoice and to happily follow the Savior, we will find them.

We rarely find something we are not looking for.

Are you looking for joy?

Seek, and ye shall find."

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/04/35uchtdorf?lang=eng>

I was a little surprised when I heard that my son was allowed to watch certain movies on his mission. One of the ones that he told us was top of the list as recommended by the mission psychologist, (also a surprise to me) was the 2022 film Puss and Boots: the last wish. My kids like these animated movies and I was hanging out with my 3 year old watching this movie recommended by my son on a mission and I must tell you. I can see why they are allowed to watch this movie. It is life changing. I don't want to spoil it because it is worth watching but there is a certain character in this movie by the name of Perrito who is a small dog that was the runt of the litter. And his story is tragic, his family tried to get rid of him in the worst possible ways. But no matter what they did to him he always saw it from a positive perspective. At one point they put him in a sock with a rock and threw him into a river and his reaction was I chewed my way through the sock and swam to the surface, then I grew into the sock and made a sweater out of it. His view of his life that was dealt an awful hand will inspire you to look at the beauty in your own life. To be grateful for what you have and to express gratitude to God for every blessing and trial that comes your way.

Perhaps when we face something difficult we could look to the Savior's example. Jesus suffered more than any of us. In fact He suffered as much as all of us combined. He felt the weight of every single pain of every human being to ever live. And He knew it was going to be hard. He knew that what He was to endure would be so crushingly painful that no mortal could or would be able to bear it. His plea to God was: Father, if there be any other way, let this crushing brutal cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done. Then in the agony of Gethsemane and Golgotha He suffered it all without a single word of anger, retaliation or even frustration. Jesus is the ultimate example of Love and patients in times of pain and sorrow. Might we strive to be more like Him in our lives. In His sacred name, Even the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.