

Come Follow Me Podcast
Elo Viz Production
Week 20
Mosiah 11-17

If you are anything like me, then you must as I do love the story of Abinadi. However, you probably also have a hard time relating to this story. Because you have never had to stand before a wicked King and defend your faith or even be asked to die for your religion. Don't get me wrong... I am certainly not saying that some of you listening, wouldn't be willing to or even secretly hope that someday you would have the opportunity to stand boldly in defense of and bear a powerful testimony of our Lord, Jesus Christ as Abinadi did. But, the odds of this scenario playing out in our day are pretty slim, or so you might think.

My hope today is to show you how we have on an almost daily basis the opportunity to be like Abinadi.

In the October Conference of 2011 President Henry B Eyring gave a talk titled "A Witness". And he started out by telling this story:

"I was once invited to speak at graduation services at a university. The university president had wanted President Gordon B. Hinckley to be invited but found that he was unavailable. So by default I got the invitation. I was then a junior member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The person who invited me to speak became anxious as she learned more about my obligations as an Apostle. She called me on the phone and said that she now understood that my duty was to be a witness of Jesus Christ.

In very firm tones she told me that I could not do that when I spoke there. She explained that the university respected people of all religious beliefs, including those who denied the existence of a God. She repeated, "You cannot fulfill your duty here."

I hung up the phone with serious questions in my mind. Should I tell the university that I would not keep my agreement to speak? It was only two weeks before the event. My appearance there had been announced. What effect would my failing to keep my agreement have on the good name of the Church?

I prayed to know what God would have me do. The answer came in a surprising way to me. I realized that the examples of Nephi, Abinadi, Alma, Amulek, and the sons of

Mosiah applied to what I was. They were bold witnesses of Jesus Christ in the face of deadly peril.

So the only choice to be made was how to prepare. I dug into everything I could learn about the university. As the day of the talk grew closer, my anxiety rose and my prayers intensified.

In a miracle like the Red Sea parting, I found a news article. That university had been honored for doing what the Church has learned to do in our humanitarian efforts across the world. And so in my talk I described what we and they had done to lift people in great need. I said that I knew that Jesus Christ was the source of the blessings that had come into the lives of those we and they had served.

After the meeting the audience rose to applaud, which seemed a little unusual to me. I was amazed but still a little anxious. I remembered what happened to Abinadi. Only Alma had accepted his witness. But that night, at a large formal dinner, I heard the university president say that in my talk he heard the words of God.

Now, such a miraculous deliverance is rare in my experience as a witness of Christ. But the effect of the Book of Mormon on your character, power, and courage to be a witness for God is certain. The doctrine and the valiant examples in that book will lift, guide, and embolden you.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2011/10/a-witness?lang=eng>

What I found interesting about this story is that the attitude of this lady that called President Eying and told him she didn't want him to be a witness of Jesus at that event, is the same attitude that most of us run into everyday. The trick then, is how we approach a situation where we feel that we need to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and even sometimes have this spiritual witness that we need to do a certain thing and be able to see the result of that, can sometimes be challenging.

We don't know if Abinadi knew about Alma's conversion because of his words. But what we do know is that it didn't matter to Abinadi. He knew what he was asked to do by God and he was going to do it come hell or high water. And he had faith. You can feel in Abinadi's testimony that he had some hope of being delivered. This is in Mosiah 13 stating in verse two:

“2 And they stood forth and attempted to lay their hands on him; but he withstood them, and said unto them:

3 **Touch me not**, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver; neither have I told you that which ye **requested** that I should tell; therefore, God will not suffer that I shall be destroyed at this time.

4 But I must fulfil the commandments wherewith God has commanded me;

7 Ye see that ye have not power to slay me, therefore I finish my **message**. Yea, and I perceive that it cuts you to your hearts because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities.

8 Yea, and my words fill you with wonder and amazement, and with anger.

9 But I finish my message; and then it **matters** not whither I go, if it so be that I am saved.”

I think this is where a lot of us fall short. We say we are willing to do God’s will, and we are at least if the outcome is what we want it to be.

Here is what I mean: We have a feeling that we should talk to someone about the gospel. So we do. It isn't great and there is not a change in either of you and so you think: Well I guess that wasn't a prompting after all. And you move on with your life.... Then a few months later you receive another similar prompting, but this time you have some experience and you think you know what the outcome will be because you have been here before and are creatures that like to evolve. So, we say in our mind: I know how this goes and so this time I might just do something different or we might even brush it aside and refuse to follow. Do you see the problem here? We think we know how the story goes, so we want to change the script, rewrite the play so it turns out better for us. But that is not how this works. God has asked us to follow Him without question or hesitation in every situation because we can't see the whole scene. We can't see 5,10, 20 years down the road and the ripple effect of one small action.

In that same talk by President Eyrig he shared this story:

“A missionary companion of mine had run away from home as a teenager, and someone had placed a Book of Mormon in a box he carried with him in his search for more happiness.

Years passed. He moved from place to place across the world. He was alone and unhappy one day when he saw the box. The box was filled with things he had carried with him. At the bottom of the box, he found the Book of Mormon. He read the promise in it and tested it. He knew it was true. That witness changed his life. He found happiness beyond his fondest dreams.”

What do you think the person that felt the prompting to put that book of Mormon in that box that day felt about that prompting? Do you think they may have questioned the validity of that feeling? I hope not. Part of the faith that we have in God needs to be trusting Him to do whatever it is that will bring about the most good. He may be asking you to plant a seed that won't even sprout its smallest leaf for years and years. But on the other hand we may see the miracles come in our day that motions of that event started years ago and had nothing to do with us. We just got to be a part of its blossoming beauty.

See, the point is that we are willing to give up our experience, our knowledge, our own personal desires and control, and trust in God no matter what that is. And that we try as hard as we can to do it his way. When Jesus tells us to come unto Him because His burden is light and His yoke is easy He is not saying that He is going to come into your life and make your life better and easier. He is not saying that He is going to share the yoke that you are carrying. He is saying come to Him. As we promised at baptism; He is asking us to lay down our old self, our own desires and step into His yoke that He is already carrying. Do His will, and your burden will be light.

Here is another story by President Ering:

“I knew [a man] that he had undergone lengthy and painful treatment for a disease and had been told by the doctors that it was terminal. They offered neither treatment nor hope.

His wife took me to his bedroom in their home. There he was, lying on his back on the top of the carefully made-up bed. He wore a freshly pressed white shirt, a tie, and new shoes.

He saw the look of surprise in my eyes, laughed quietly, and explained, “After you give me a blessing, I want to be ready to respond to the call to take up my bed and go to work.” As it turned out, he was ready for the interview he would soon have with the Master, for whom he had worked so faithfully.

He was an example of the fully converted Latter-day Saints I meet often after they have given a life of dedicated service. They press on.

President Marion G. Romney described it this way: “In one who is wholly converted, desire for things [contrary] to the gospel of Jesus Christ has actually died, and substituted therefor is a love of God with a fixed and controlling determination to keep his commandments.””

In this prideful, self absolved society that we live in, I hope that we can find the courage to put down our pride, to lay aside our own intellect and experience, to surrender our will to the Father and to the Son. To do as they ask without any thought or judgment of what their plan might be. Being wholly converted to doing their will exactly as they have asked and come what may even be willing to die at the hands of our enemies like Abinadi and serve the Master to the very end.

This is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Chirst, Amen.