

Come Follow Me Podcast
Elo Viz production
Week 25
Alma 8-12

I'd like to pose a question to you. Something for you to ponder as we discuss some doctrine this week. The question is: Is it worth it? Is all of this following the commandments worth it? Does it really matter if we pray every morning and night? Does it matter if we fast or even take the sacrament? Does it really make a difference if we are kind to others? Is it all worth it?

The verses I would like to focus on this week are in Alma 12 verses 9-11. This is when Alma is condensing with Zeezrom and he teaches that:

“It is given unto many to **know** the **mysteries** of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart **only** according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

10 And therefore, he that will **harden** his heart, the same receiveth the **lesser** portion of the word; and he that will **not** harden his heart, to him is **given** the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

11 And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser **portion** of the word until they **know nothing** concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the **chains** of **hell**.

13 Then if our hearts have been hardened, yea, if we have hardened our hearts against the word, insomuch that it has not been found in us, then will our state be awful, for then we shall be condemned.”

He makes it pretty clear that there are huge blessings that come to those that do not harden their hearts, and to those that do harden their hearts there is a lack or a taking back of knowledge from the Creator.

So, what does it mean to have a hardened heart?

Do you recall in Mark chapter 3 when Jesus entered into the synagogue and there was a man with a withered hand? The Pharisees were watching Him. They wanted to catch Him breaking the law so they could accuse Him.

“**4** And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the **sabbath** days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?”

I think to us this question has an obvious answer, of course we want to do good not just on the sabbath but everyday. But these Pharisees stayed silent. They didn't answer.

“5 And when [Jesus] had looked round about on them with **anger**, being grieved for the **hardness of their hearts**, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.”

A hard heart is a heart void of compassion, or empathy. A heart that refuses to be moved upon by the Spirit. A heart that rejects the word or direction of God.

Alma makes it clear that those that have a hard heart receive a lesser portion of the word and their light grows dimmer and dimmer until they know nothing they are led down by chains to the awful Hell.

I love the imagery we receive in the Book of Zechariah. This is in chapter 7 verses 12 and 13

“They made their hearts *as* an adamant **stone**, (some translations a rock hard diamond) lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former **prophets**: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. **13** Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not hear; so **they cried**, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:”

To me this teaches that we can tell where we stand on this subject based on the way we respond to: First, the scriptures, second the promptings of the Spirit and third to others.

So, for a second lets assume that we are not great at this. During our pondering this week we discover that we may have some hardness in our heart that we would like to get rid of. How do we do it? How do we soften our hearts so we can have the blessing of the word that Alma spoke of?

Ezekiel taught that a soft heart is a gift from God. That it is something we must ask for and seek after.

This is in Ezekiel 36:24-30

“**24** For I will take you from among the heathen, and **gather** you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own **land**.

25 ¶ Then will I **sprinkle** clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your **filthiness**, and from all your **idols**, will I cleanse you.

26 A **new heart** also will I **give** you, and a new **spirit** will I put within you: and I will take away the stony **heart** out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my [spirit](#) within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

28 And ye shall dwell in the [land](#) that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will [call for the corn](#), and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

30 And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.”

Sounds amazing doesn't it? A new heart is not something that we can get on our own. It is a gift that God will give us if we are willing to do his will and seek Him diligently.

I began with a question. I hope that the Spirit has helped you to answer that question for yourself. See, the main lie of Sin is that God and His ways are not satisfying. That there is no joy or happiness is the pursuit of God. That we need to look to sin to find that satisfaction and happiness. I hope that life has taught you that this is not the truth. That sin in all its many forms only gives an illusion of joy. In the words of Alma: “[wickedness](#) never was [happiness](#).” (Alma 41:10)

In the book “Hear Him” Alyssa Edwards shared this story:

“I grew up hearing incredible stories of people hearing the voice of God. whether it was experience shared during a fast and testimony meeting, the grandiose stories scattered through the scripture , or the examples shared during general conferences, I felt like everyone around me heard God, except me. Little did I know, I was simply not aware of how to Hear Him.

I remember hearing Him for the first time in 2014, or at least, I thought that was the first time I heard Him. I was a missionary in Guatemala City East Mission and had just woken up from surgery—Sounds like the start to a poorly executed joke, but it was my reality. I was sick during much of my mission, which ultimately led me to that post-operation room, the nicest room I had seen in months. It was a dark room with a small fan that blew on me every six seconds, and my sweet mission companion was fast asleep on the makeshift bed on the floor. Despite my companion present in that room, I felt completely alone, I was absolutely afraid.

I sat in that bed weeping and unable to move my lower extremities, I cried out to my God and asked why? The tears continued to run down my cheeks as I attempted bargaining with God, and then I heard a physical voice that certainly did not belong to my companion or me. I listened to the instruction, reached over to my backpack, and pulled out a small notebook I had filled prior to leaving for Guatemala. I flipped open the little serial-bond pad to a page where I had recorded a single verse from the Doctrine and Covenants: “The son of man hath descended below all things, art thou greater than He?” (D&C 122:8)

The tears cascaded down my cheeks now as I sobbed, I had not been abandoned. I was the first to be deeply afraid, I was not the first to be utterly alone, I was not the first to question my God, and I was not going to be the last. The Savior descended below all things, including operations in Guatemala. This moment was pivotal in my understanding of the Atonement and also in my understanding of how I hear my Savior.

I have counted that moment as the first time I actually heard Him, but there is no way that is correct. I do not believe a God of miracles was waiting until I was twenty years old to talk with me. It is clear I heard Him prior to that. I heard Him when I was six years old, when my aunt returned from her mission, and I knew I needed to go on one. I heard Him when I felt the prompting to record the reference from the Doctrine and Covenants. I heard Him when I followed the impression to pack that small notebook in my backpack prior to leaving on my mission. Hearing is so much more than the physical act of listening to sounds and turning them into words. Hearing Him is knowing Him, feeling Him, is understanding Him.

So how do we Hear Him? I am sure my parents, my leaders, and my teachers taught me about hearing the Savior, but I could not grasp the concept until I experienced it myself. I went year and year believing the Saviour was not communicating with me and there had to be something wrong with me. But that is just not true. I am so grateful that despite me not realizing He was speaking to me, Jesus kept speaking and continually reaching out to me. How patient of Him to speak when I was not understanding or acknowledging that deity was actually communicating with me.

The moment I realized the Savior speaks in more ways than just words, I became quicker to recognize my own thoughts and feelings as impressions from him. I know that if He is speaking to me, He is most certainly speaking to you! It seems as though the most important thing for us to realize is that the way in which He communicated with us is very personal. And the way I Hear Him will be different from the way you Hear Him. and that is beautiful. If you feel as though you cannot Hear Him, pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and impressions because I guarantee He is speaking-all we need to do is figure out how we Hear Him.”

<https://amzn.to/3VpM0mg> - Book “Hear Him” Page 126.

So, Is it worth it? Absolutely it is. It is worth every minute of every day to seek Him, to pray to Him, to listen to Him. I pray that we will not harden our hearts but that we might cherish every moment when He speaks to us. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.