

Come Follow Me Podcast  
Elo Viz Production  
Week 31  
Alma 36-38

In Alma 36 we find some very important doctrine. One that I think we miss or brush over most of the time. He actually lays it out right in the center of the chapter but it is sandwiched between another doctrine that he repeats at the beginning and at the end of this chapter. Verse one says:

“My **son**, give ear to my words; for I swear unto you, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land.”

Then at the very last verse he says again:

“But behold, my son, this is not all; . . . that **inasmuch** as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall **prosper** in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence. Now this is according to his word.” (Alma 36:30)

We have discussed this in the past a few times. And this doctrine of prosperity is repeated over and over again throughout all the sacred writings of this book. And we will come back to this point after I highlight one other piece to the puzzle. Something we must recognize before this prosperity can or will take place.

In this chapter Alma is speaking to his son Helaman. And he recounts his experience with the angel, his struggle and redemption. But his words are different this time. Listen closely to how he explains this. This is in Alma 36 starting in verse 6:

“6 For I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to **destroy** the church of God; but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop us by the way.

7 And behold, he spake unto us, as it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did **tremble** beneath our feet; and we all fell to the earth, for the **fear** of the Lord came upon us.

8 But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel.

9 And he said unto me: If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God.

10 And it came to pass that I fell to the earth; and it was for the space of **three** days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs.

12 But I was racked with **eternal torment**, for my soul was **harrowed up** to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

**13** Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was **tormented** with the **pains** of hell; yea, I saw that I had **rebelled** against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

**14** Yea, and I had **murdered** many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction; yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, that the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror.

**15** Oh, thought I, that I **could** be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my **deeds**.

**16** And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the **pains** of a **damned** soul.”

You can see what he is emphasizing, because he is repeating over and over the pain and anguish that he is experiencing because of his sins. This should be very relatable to all of us. Though I highly doubt that we have been struck by an angel to where we couldn't speak or move for 3 days. We have all had times when we felt the weight of our actions and faced the fear of the consequences. This is a natural part of learning in this mortal life. We make a mistake, feel the regret of that mistake, learn from it, repent and move on with our lives.

Alma in this case was not able to move on. He was stuck in this type of Hell that kept him in the present agony of his sins. I tend to think that this is probably what judgment day will feel like for those that have turned away from God. Those without the knowledge and understanding of the atonement really do not have a way to deal or cope with these feelings. It is only in and through the sacrifice of the Savior that we are able to have relief from this pain. I love Alma's next statement as he is about to give up all hope. This is in Alma 36 starting in verse 17, He says: “**17** And it came to pass that as I was thus **racked** with torment, while I was **harrowed up** by the **memory** of my many sins, behold, I **remembered** also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

**18** Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, **have** mercy on me, who am **in** the **gall of bitterness**, and am encircled about by the everlasting **chains** of **death**.

**19** And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my **pains no more**; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

**20** And oh, what **joy**, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!”

This is what happens when someone gives their life to Christ. Anyone, from the most righteous saint to the worst sinner. Once we realize that our only hope, our saving grace can not be obtained by our own power but that we must turn to Jesus, it all makes sense and the light and

joy that fills our life is a cosmic burst of freedom. And that is what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about.

So, here is the principle that I would like to highlight. When we do missionary work, when we talk to our neighbors and friends about the gospel we tend to take a used car salesman approach. We say things like: Jesus Loves you. Jesus dies on the cross for you. Jesus has a plan for you. He will provide for all of your needs. Do this and you can get this. Which is true. Alma says it twice in this same chapter. Remember how he starts and ends it: “inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land”. But this is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are busy selling a product to people that is leaving them feeling empty and unfulfilled. We are telling people all about what Jesus can do for them. But what about those that are dying? What about those that will live in poverty their entire life. What about those that won't have to us what seems like a blessed life? This is why we see so many walking away from their faith. This is why so many leave the church. Because Jesus didn't do for them what was promised to them. We have been signing people up for what Jesus can do for them.

But the truth is that Jesus does love you! He does have a plan for you! He does want to bless you.

See, here is what we are missing: It is not about what Jesus will do for you nearly as much as it is what He has already done for you.

This is what I mean by that: If Jesus never did another thing for you, He still did everything for you! See we all deserve Hell, fire and damnation. That is what we are entitled to. No matter how many good works you have done, no matter how righteous you try to be, you do not measure up to the standard required to enter into the presence of God. And to live with Him in heaven. Some people are going to die young. Some are going to go through pain and sorrow and agony. And if the Jesus we sold them is all about what He is going to do for them, and not about who He is to them, then they may lose faith. They may miss the opportunity to see God as the Gracious, merciful God that He is.

Patric Kearon said it this way:

“Our Father’s beautiful plan, even His “fabulous” plan, is designed to bring you home, *not* to keep you out. No one has built a roadblock and stationed someone there to turn you around and send you away. In fact, it is the exact opposite. God is in relentless pursuit of you. He “wants all of His children to choose to return to Him,” and He employs every possible measure to bring you back.

Our loving Father oversaw the Creation of this very earth for the express purpose of providing an opportunity for you and for me to have the stretching and refining

experiences of mortality, the chance to use our God-given moral agency to choose Him, to learn and grow, to make mistakes, to repent, to love God and our neighbour, and to one day return home to Him.

He sent His precious Beloved Son to this fallen world to live the full range of the human experience, to provide an example for the rest of His children to follow, and to atone and redeem. Christ's great atoning gift removes every roadblock of physical and spiritual death that would separate us from our eternal home.

Everything about the Father's plan for His beloved children is designed to bring everyone home."

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/04/45kearon?lang=eng>

It is not about what He will do, It is about who He is to you. Jesus already paid the price to save your soul from the eternal chains. He went to Gethsemane and Golgotha, He willingly entered into the tomb and took death upon Him. He boldly walked into hell and took the chains of death and pain and kicked down the stone door on His way out. He freely, merciful and graciously saved each and every one of our souls. He paid all of your debts and stands there with open arms waiting for us to accept His gift.

If Jesus never did another thing for you, It would still be enough. It is not about what He is going to do for you, It is about what He has already done to save you and give you a life with Him in paradise, forever.

If you came to Jesus for what you can get. And it is anything other than spending eternity in His presents, then you came for the wrong reason. Make sure you're in this for who Jesus is to you, not what He is going to do for you.

Remember Alma, "as my mind caught hold upon [Jesus], I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, **have** mercy on me, who am **in** the **gall of bitterness**, and am encircled about by the everlasting **chains of death**.

Now, when I thought this, I could remember my **pains no more**; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

Oh, what **joy**, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!"

This is what Jesus has done for you also. Cry out to Him. Accept Him as your Lord and Savior. Kneel before Him and dedicate your life to Him. And be delivered from the pain and anguish of your sin. Trust in Him and He will give you the peace that will last an eternity.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Quotes and ideas from Kelly Kopp Ministries:

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