

Come Follow Me Podcast  
Elo Viz production  
Week 5  
1 Nephi 16-22

Lately I have been learning about the Rhinoceros. It is a fascinating animal. Those that work closely with these animals say that they are peaceful and gentle, but also powerful and steady. I also found out that their skin can get up to 2 inches thick. In fact a long time ago, thousands of years ago natives used to use Rhino skin to protect themselves in battle from arrows and swords. This very thick skin protects the Rhino from thorns, predators and even pesky birds.

Did you know that a Rhinoceros can weigh up to 4 tons, but they have terrible eyesight. They can only see about 30 feet in front of them. Which is crazy because they can run as fast as 40 miles per hour. Could you imagine this massive 8000 pound beast running straight at you at that speed with those long pointed horns. That would be terrifying. When these animals want to go somewhere they get there fast and nothing gets in their way. But, what I find fascinating about this, is that they have a very hard time moving backwards. The way their body is structured, going backwards is not an option for them, so they are always moving forward.

Im hope that you are seeing what I saw when looking at the facts of this fascinating creation from our almighty God. It could be said that spiritually speaking Nephi was a Rhinoceros. Especially in these chapters we are studying this week. In chapter 16 we learn about some of the trials that they had to face in the wilderness. One being that Nephi broke his bow while out hunting for food.

And of course, as in their go to; when something hard happens, it says that Nephi's "brethren were angry with [him] because of the loss of my bow, for we did obtain no food. And it came to pass that we did return without food to our families, and being much fatigued, because of their journeying, they did suffer much for the want of food. **20** And it came to pass that Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael did begin to murmur exceedingly, because of their sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness; and also my father began to murmur against the Lord his God; yea, and they were all exceedingly sorrowful, even that they did [murmur](#) against the Lord." (1 Nephi 16:18-20)

Can you imagine this situation? Let's imagine for a minute that you are Nephi. Your bow is broken, your brother's bows are no good either. You're basically the only one that is taking care of this huge group of people, making sure they have food, shelter, and even protecting them from the elements and predators. You are in unfamiliar territory and now everyone at camp, even the prophet is complaining and murmuring. What do you do? How do you respond? If someone were to do a news interview with a camera in your face what would you say?

This is what Nephi says “21 Now it came to pass that I, Nephi, having been afflicted with my brethren because of the loss of my bow, and their bows having lost their [springs](#), it began to be exceedingly difficult, yea, insomuch that we could obtain no food.”  
(1 Nephi 16:21)

It began to be difficult? Yea, I'd say that is the understatement of the century. Everyone was starving, including Nephi and his children, and it was cold because they were not allowed to have fire until they reached the shore where he built a boat. (1 Nephi 17:12) Everyone is complaining and Nephi says “Yea, it began to be difficult.” Talk about spiritually thick Rhino skin. Nothing could discourage this guy. Not even the possibility of death in the middle of no-where.

This characteristic of thick spiritual skin can be seen across all the ancient writings. It is really because of these hard times that come and go in our lives that we even have scriptures to read today. These are the defining moments of our life that give us knowledge, faith, and courage to keep going. That is what they are there for. It may sound like a more desirable path to have everything in our life work out with no hardship or challenges, but that kind of life will not build the person you need to be in order to endure the presents of God for the eternities to come.

It was the now murmuring Lehi that will soon teach us:

“11 For it must needs be, that there is an [opposition](#) in all things. If not so, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.

12 Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no [purpose](#) in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes, and also the power, and the mercy, and the [justice](#) of God.

13 And if ye shall say there is [no law](#), ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not [there](#) is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away.” (2 Nephi 2:11-13)

Perhaps this is something that Nephi had to teach his father Lehi. Perhaps it was situations like this that taught everyone there that hard times are not the end of times.

Elder Benar said it this way:

“I promise your personal anguish will be relieved and your obedience and faithfulness to patiently submit your will to God will be rewarded in “the own due time of the Lord.”<sup>14</sup> “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”.”

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Nephi knew that this was going to all work out. That God was and is in control and all Nephi needed to do was to trust in Him and wait on the Lord.

Elder Holland emphasized this point when he said:

“How long do we wait for relief from hardships that come upon us? What about enduring personal trials while we wait and wait, and help seems so slow in coming? Why the delay when burdens seem more than we can bear?”

While we work and wait together for the answers to some of our prayers, I offer you my apostolic promise that they are heard and they are answered, though perhaps not at the time or in the way we wanted. But they are *always* answered at the time and in the way an omniscient and eternally compassionate parent should answer them. My beloved brothers and sisters, please understand that He who never sleeps nor slumbers<sup>2</sup> cares for the happiness and ultimate exaltation of His children above all else that a divine being has to do. He is pure love, gloriously personified, and Merciful Father is His name.

The point? The point is that faith means trusting God in good times and bad, even if that includes some suffering until we see His arm revealed in our behalf.<sup>9</sup> That can be difficult in our modern world when many have come to believe that the highest good in life is to avoid all suffering, that no one should ever anguish over anything.<sup>10</sup> But that belief will never lead us to “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

I too suggest that “one’s life ... cannot be both faith-filled and stress-free.” It simply will not work “to glide naively through life,” saying as we sip another glass of lemonade, “Lord, give me all thy choicest virtues, but be certain not to give me grief, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor opposition. Please do not let anyone dislike me or betray me, and above all, do not ever let me feel forsaken by Thee or those I love. In fact, Lord, be careful to keep me from all the experiences that made Thee divine. And then, when the rough sledding by everyone else is over, please let me come and dwell with Thee,

where I can boast about how similar our strengths and our characters are as I float along on my cloud of comfortable Christianity.”<sup>12</sup>.”

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Brothers and Sisters, comfortable Christianity is not true Christianity. When trial and troubles face us, we can do as Lamien and Lemuel and complain to our Father, asking why this has happened to us. Or we can do like Nephi; we can move forward the best we can until revelation comes. Learning as much as we can along the way. Instead of asking “why?”, might we instead ask “now what?”. Now that things are becoming difficult, what would you like me to do, Lord? Nephi’s answer was to make a bow out of wood and ask his father Lehi where to go to get food. Nephi realized that a hardship or a trial are not placed in front of us to be a stumbling block but rather as a stairway. Intended to lift us up, to give us a greater view and to make us stronger.

While we study this week might we gain the strength to become like Nephi and like a Rhinoceros. Constantly moving forward with power, striving to see what is right in front of us and developing thick spiritual and mental skin to withstand any dart of the adversary. So when he attempts to hurt us or drag us down we can brush off his puny blows, we won't even feel them or recognize their impact because our faith is firmly planted in the belief that God is on our side, that God is always with us, always defending us, and He is always teaching us.

Of this great truth I testify, In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, Amen.