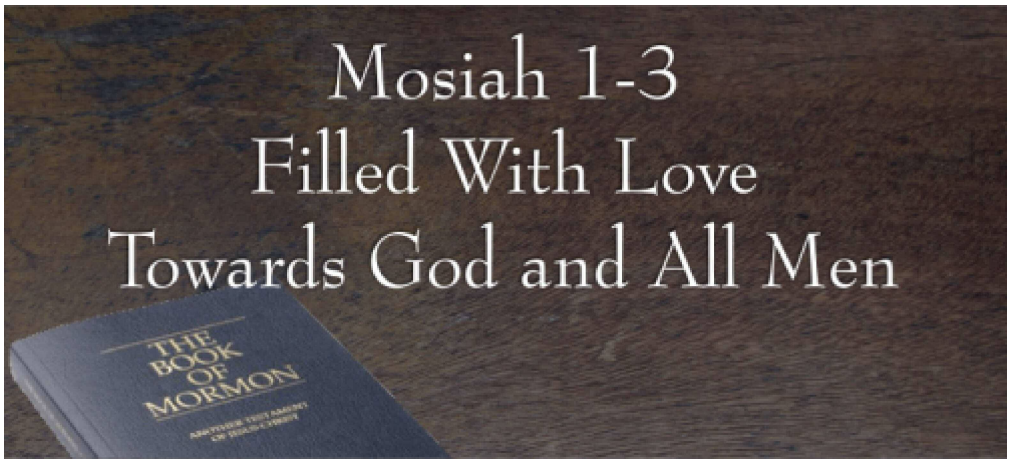

Scheduled for study April 13-19, 2020. When we are filled with love toward God and all men the world becomes a different place. This week King Benjamin teaches us how to serve one another and how to learn the mysteries of God.

Day 1

Mosiah 2:1-9 - Receiving the word of God requires preparation.

King Benjamin gave one reason for recording our spiritual impressions: "It were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates" (Mosiah 1:4).

King Benjamin tells his people why he has called them to assemble as one body. He has something important enough to say to them that all other business in the kingdom is put on hold until the king has his say. In Mosiah 2:9 the king gives them a command then lists three reasons for the assembly. I have taken some liberty with the formatting, but I think it helps get the message across better.

Hearken unto me

Open your ears that ye may hear

[Open] your hearts that ye may understand

[Open] your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view

Mind you, these are all common enough phrases from the scriptures, but what do they mean? What is their intent? To hearken is to pay attention. Kind Benjamin wants them to focus on only what he is saying to them. He wants 100% of their attention. He really wants them to understand what he is about to communicate to them.

When someone speaks to us, it doesn't necessarily mean we are hearing, let alone listening to, what they are saying. Sometimes when someone speaks to us what we really hear in our heads is "Blah, blah, blah, blah ..." King Benjamin wants us to let his words into our heads, our minds, and into our hearts. He wants us to hear his words like we wish someone we love would hear us when we warn them that what they are doing in their life is possibly harmful to them. We want them to comprehend what we understand so they can seriously consider our words. In like fashion King Benjamin wants us to comprehend what he understands so we will seriously consider his words.

Benjamin also wanted them to soften their hearts, meaning choose to believe what he was about to tell them. We soften our own hearts by choosing to believe what we are told. We may need to ask God for help in doing so, but it is first and foremost an act of choice on our part. He was saying, 'Please let me into your heart so you can feel the power and importance of my words.' As an aside, do you think this is how the Brethren feel when they address us during General Conference? I am sure they have all prayed and fasted that their words will have an impact on our lives and help us to change for the better.

Finally, the people are told that when we open our ears, our hearts, and our minds, it is then (and only then) that we can understand the workings of God. We call them mysteries, because until we open our ears, our hearts, and our minds, what God does, and why He does it, remains a mystery to us. For example, why does God allow suffering? Why does God deliberately wipe out whole civilizations? How can that be just? How can that behavior be loving? Only when we come to understand why God does what He does do questions such as these cease to be mysteries to us.

The point of us reading the scriptures, attending our meetings, studying, praying, and trying to live up to the covenants we have made is specifically so that we can come to comprehend the love of God. Love must be lived in order to be appreciated and fully understood. All the commandments we have received are part and parcel of this process of God teaching us to think, feel, and be like He is, which is all governed by one thing - love.

As you read this sermon by King Benjamin, try to see what he is attempting to show his people. Can you feel his words? Do you hear your God speaking in your mind and in your heart the words He gave to the King to deliver to his people? Does it create in you a greater sense of gratitude and appreciation for God and His mercies toward you? When you have read and pondered the King's sermon, note how you feel. Can you put it into words? Can you write it down so you will remember it later when the feeling has passed? This is how the scriptures themselves were often recorded.

Day 2

Mosiah 2:10-26 - When I serve others, I am also serving God.

King Benjamin gave one reason for recording our spiritual impressions: "It were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates" (Mosiah 1:4).

Let's open today's lesson with three verses of scripture:

Mosiah 2:17

> 17 And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.

Matthew 25:40, 45

> 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.
>
> 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it **not** to one of the least of these, ye did it **not** to me. [emphasis added]

Luke 6:31

> 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Do you see a pattern here? This notion that when we do something for, or to, others we are doing the same to God is not a new doctrine found in just the Book of Mormon. Both of the other scriptures are statements made by Jesus during his mortal ministry. We cannot separate our attitudes toward our fellow man from our attitudes toward our

God, for they are one and the same. What we do to one, we do to the other. How we treat one, we treat the other.

What Christ has given us in these three verses, and what King Benjamin was trying to demonstrate to his people, is that how we treat others is of a celestial concern. We are all responsible for each other. Think back on Christ's conversation with Cain in the Old Testament. In Genesis 4:9 we see that Cain has killed his brother, and when the Lord comes to inquire as to what happened the following occurs.

> 9 ¶ And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

Cain didn't want to take responsibility for the welfare of his brother, but the Lord thought otherwise. King Benjamin told his people that his service in their behalf for all those years was service spent to his God. A celestial attribute is that we don't care for our own welfare as much as we care for the welfare of others. Celestial people are outward focused, not inward focused.

All of these scriptures teach this one lesson, that if we want to be like God, to return and live with Him, we must learn that others matter more than we do. If Christ did not have this same attitude, how could he have suffered as he did for all of us? I can see only one way he could do what he did, and that was that His father's will was more important to him than his own, and that our needs outweighed his own. He was willing to lay down his life to attest to that. In fact, didn't he say just that in John 15:13?

> 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Day 3

Mosiah 3:1-20 - I can overcome the natural man and become a Saint through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

King Benjamin gave one reason for recording our spiritual impressions: "It were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates" (Mosiah 1:4).

The manual has some great questions you should read and consider. The following thoughts are only meant to add to your pool of ideas and your thinking.

To be a Saint is to be one who is consecrated or made holy. I would think this is what making covenants does to us. We become consecrated or set apart from the rest of the world through the covenants we make with God.

Now here is a piece of difficult doctrine: anyone can seek forgiveness through Christ's atoning sacrifice. But salvation, meaning exaltation, can only come through seeking out the Atonement through the act of making covenants. It is the covenants we make and keep that allows his Atonement for our sins to elevate us to the stature of becoming holy and pure. Without those covenants we can seek forgiveness, but our lives will never rise above a terrestrial level. To truly overcome the natural man and become a Saint, we need covenants and priesthood power.

In Mosiah 3:19 we read this.

> 19 For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

It is probably just me, but that last bit sounds a bit harsh to me. Must we really be "willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon" us? I thought about this, and my conclusion is that we are not talking about a walk in the park here. We are discussing godhood. This is not a casual or common achievement. If we want to learn to be gods ourselves, we must be willing to humble ourselves completely, meaning to have no pride that will get in our way of accomplishing our goal. We must be willing to learn whatever lesson our Father has to teach us, and to do whatever He wants us to do in order to learn of His ways and become like Him.

The reason the natural man is an enemy to God, is because the natural man is willful, meaning full of pride. We set our wills against God's will. All of that is counter to what it takes to become like God. We must put off our natural tendencies and become like children, humble and submissive, and willing to be lead by Him in all things if we are to learn how to be like God.

Scripture Study and Family Home Evening

Mosiah 2:9-19 - The nature of service.

Let's talk for a moment or two about the nature of service. There are different kinds of service, and different levels of service. When I think of service in a generic way, I think of picking up someone and dropping them off at their destination, or taking some food over to someone's house because of sickness or a new baby, etc. These are "quick fix" types of service that never go away. These types of helps to one another are always needed. Someone's car is always going to break down, someone's washer or dryer will give out leaving them no way to clean their clothes. The list is very long.

What kind of service did King Benjamin say he rendered to his people? Was it the quick-fix kind of service? Here are his words from Mosiah 2:11.

> 11 ... I have been chosen by this people, and consecrated by my father, and was suffered by the hand of the Lord that I should be a ruler and a king over this people; and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power, **to serve you with all the might, mind and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me.** (Emphasis added)

As a side note here, King Benjamin's reference to suffering means he was permitted or allowed. Does that sound like a quick-fix kind of monarch to you? He goes on to tell his people that instead of being served by them, he labored with his own hands for his support. See Mosiah 2:14.

> 14 And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne—and of all these things which I have spoken, ye yourselves are witnesses this day.

The kind of service King Benjamin is talking about is the kind of service Christ provided during his mortal ministry. There was no expectation of recognition, reward, or payback for what was done. Everything was done out of a sense of pure service that he might show them how to serve one another.

The kind of service King Benjamin is focusing on in his address to his people is the life of service kind of service. This includes the spouse who cares for their debilitated companion for years on end, the parent who gives up everything to care for a child with special needs, or a neighborhood of priesthood brethren who go over to a woman's house every night of the year, for many years, to put her in bed and make sure she is comfortable, because she has very little physical support, and doesn't want to go into a care center. Or what about the woman who takes in a motherless child and raises that

child as one of her own? This is service that takes everything we have. It lasts for years, and requires commitment and love to sustain.

When you read King Benjamin's address to his people, can you feel his love for those whom he has served with such devotion all his life? We may not all face the need to serve with such intensity. But we all need to learn how to serve with more intensity than the quick-fix variety. A more intense form of service may be required to keep and sustain a friendship, a marriage relationship, a family tie, or to hold a community together. There are opportunities all around us that require sustained and continual effort. This is celestial service, the kind that doesn't go away or die. This is the kind of service that shows that there are such things in this life that are stronger than the bands of death.

Here is a PDF of this week's study material.
Print it out for greater convenience in your studies.

BoM Week 16

(Mosiah 1-3)