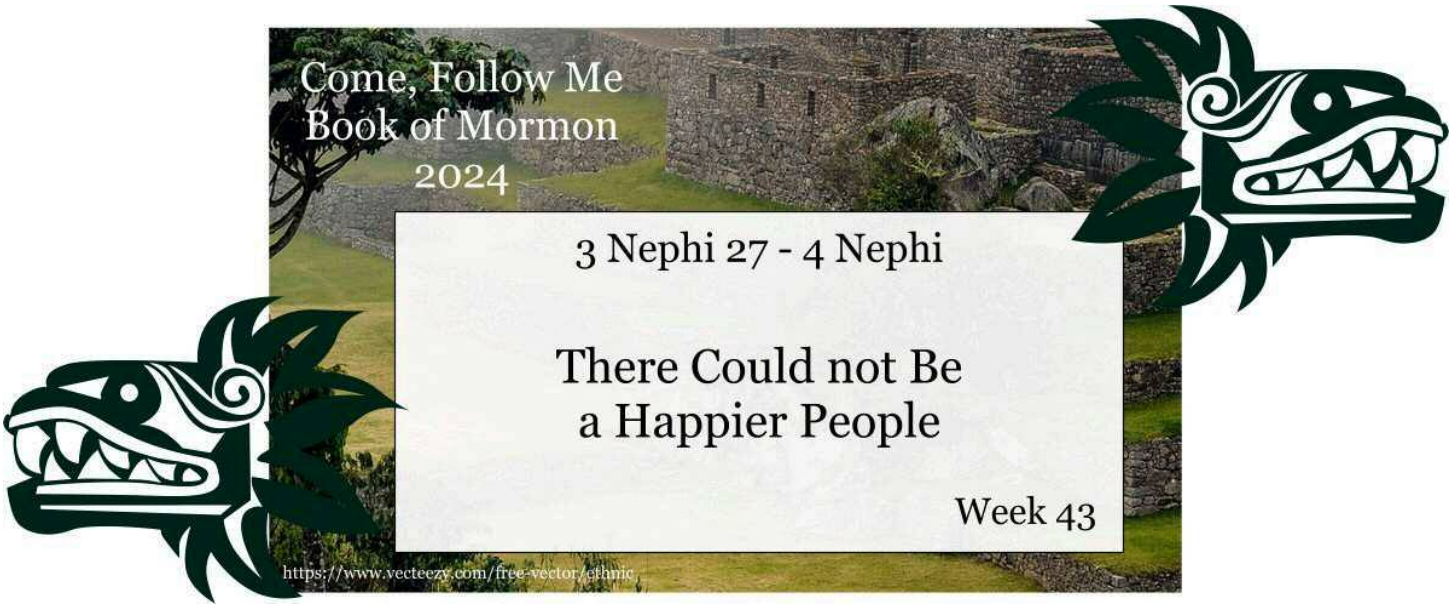

Week 43 is scheduled for study October 21-27, 2024. A key part of Christ's gospel is that it unifies people, which in turn creates prosperity and happiness. Happiness is the purpose behind unity.

Day 1

3 Nephi 27:1-12 - The Church of Jesus Christ is called in His name.

I am doing here today what I have never done before. To make a point I am reposting an entire section of a previous article. This is the Personal Study section from week 31 titled "Look to God and Live." I am making the point again because this is why all things are done in Christ's name, including the naming of his church.

Why we aren’t worthy

This is a short doctrinal point I have pondered over for years, and just thought I ought to share what I have learned. Since it is short, and the manual doesn’t give us anything for this section of the lesson, I figured this is a good place to talk about it.

Our personal unworthiness

I want to connect Alma’s closing advice to Shiblon with a statement Christ makes several times in the scriptures. Here is Alma 38:14

> 14 Do not say: O God, I thank thee that we are better than our brethren; but rather say: O Lord, forgive my unworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy—yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times.

This is interesting advice from a father to his son. Alma is about to be translated. The assumption in all translations throughout the scriptures is that they must be extraordinarily righteous and worthy people to qualify for such a blessing. Elijah and Moses were both translated. I am thinking they qualified as extremely righteous people. Yet Alma, who is just about to be translated himself is telling Shiblon to always acknowledge his own unworthiness before the Lord. I also assume that if he is giving this advice to Shiblon that Alma also acknowledges his own unworthiness before the Lord.

Alma was worthy enough to be translated, but he was still unworthy before the Lord? Is there ever a point where we become “worthy” before God? Now we can get to the second half of this discussion.

Jesus Christ is worthy

Here are some verses where Christ’s worthiness is made the point of the verse.

3 Nephi 21:9

> 9 For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them those who will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them.

For Christ’s sake and not for our sake?

3 Nephi 27:7

> 7 Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.

Again we see that God blesses the church for the sake of Jesus, not us.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:46

> 46 I called you servants for the world’s sake, and ye are their servants for my sake –

Christ is telling Joseph Smith that he was called to be a servant to the world for his (Christ’s) sake.

3 Nephi 12:11

> 11 And blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake;

Again, it is all about Christ, not us.

My point

There is a physical fact I have been missing my whole life. It is as true as light makes things discernable and darkness obscures things. The reason Jesus is our Christ, our Messiah is because he is the only one of all of God’s children who is worthy of all the blessings and power God has to bestow upon His children. Jesus is worthy, completely and fully in every sense of the word. He never broke a commandment, never acted in a selfish manner, never acted for his own interests, never did anything that might detract from his personal perfection. He is completely in harmony with everything God has ever stated or put into place in the universe. Therefore he is the only one who is actually worthy to ask anything he wants and expect a positive answer from God, our Father.

We can’t say the same about ourselves. We are in constant need of repentance, which we have to do through the atoning sacrifice Jesus made for us. We are never worthy of God’s blessings. So why does He bless us? He blesses those children who Christ asks Him to bless, because Christ is worthy to ask what he wants. This is why we do all things in the name of Jesus, for Jesus is the only worthy child of God. All our prayers are answered in the affirmative (when they are answered in the affirmative) because Christ, as our intercessor pleads for us with the Father, and because of Christ’s worthiness God grants our prayers. We owe everything we get from God to Christ.

When Alma tells Shiblon to always acknowledge his unworthiness before God, he is just stating a fact. None of us are capable of being worthy before God to ask Him anything and expect a positive reply. Everything we do must be done through the name of God’s only worthy son, Jesus the Christ. Alma was admitting to Shiblon that Alma recognized

his own place in the universe. He was acknowledging to his son his own dependence upon the Savior for all things. We all live with this same dependence.

When God ordained Jesus to be our Redeemer, ALL things pertaining to our salvation were laid on his shoulders. Being the only worthy child of God, Jesus is the only one who has the right to petition God for something and know he will be answered in a positive way. All Christ's prayers/petitions to God are granted, because he never asks amiss. He has learned to always make sure his own will is in synch with his Father's will.

This is why we pray in Christ's name, name the church after him, and do all things in his name. He is our only link to God, outside of our own prayers to Him (God). It would be entirely inappropriate for us to name the church after the name of any other person or thing. Christ is our one and only way back to God. He must always be the center of our attention.

Day 2

3 Nephi 27:10-22 - The Church of Jesus Christ is built on His gospel.

It is not enough for us to name our church after Jesus Christ. If the doctrines we teach are not also the doctrines he has personally given mankind then the name of the church will not save anyone. His gospel is a collection of eternal truths that will lead us back to our Father in Heaven. We must espouse Christ's gospel (good news) if we are to get to where we hope to arrive someday. What Jesus gave the Disciples is a threefold combination. The church must bear his name to represent that he is our master, and that church must teach his doctrine in order to save the people. Any other combination of name and doctrine will not work. This church is authorized to do what it does in Christ's name, because we have been given Christ's priesthood to give us the authority to speak and act in his name.

Day 3

3 Nephi 28:1-11 - What is it that ye desire?

On the surface these verses are all about what the 12 Disciples desired of Christ. Nine of them wanted to complete their mortal ministry and then speedily return to Christ in his kingdom. But three of them wanted to remain on earth to continue the work of salvation among the children of men until Christ comes in his glory. Frankly, I have no idea why this story is in the scriptures. The same story played out in Jerusalem with his Apostles. But John the Beloved was the only one who wanted to remain and continue working for the salvation of humanity.

What caught my attention this time around was verse 11.

> 11 And the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me; and the Father giveth the Holy Ghost unto the children of men, because of me.

"Because of me" is a significant phrase. We are only allowed to have His company, because of the worthiness of Jesus Christ. It is for his sake that God grants us the presence of the Spirit in our lives. I don't think it is possible for me to over emphasize the importance of the Holy Spirit and His influence He has on us. He is a God, sent to give us comfort, strength, direction, and is tasked to lead us in all things to Christ. Without the Spirit we would lose our way and not be able to make the changes necessary for our own salvation. He teaches us the will of Christ then supports us in our efforts to follow through in our obedience to Christ's commandments. His help is indispensable.

While today's verses cover a one-time request the Disciples made of Jesus about their ministry, in all other verses in 3 Nephi what the Disciples prayed for was the gift or presence of the Holy Ghost. This is what they desired most, for they could not fulfill their callings without Him. The influence of the Spirit is what we should be desiring most, for without Him we also cannot fulfill the full measure of our callings and the personal transformations that are needed for our own salvation.

Day 4

3 Nephi 29-30 - The Book of Mormon is a sign that God's latter-day work is being fulfilled.

I am not aware of any place in the scriptures where God's latter-day work is clearly spelled out for the gathering of Israel and the preparing of His people for the second

coming of Christ. The only real specific we are given in the scriptures is that when the record of the Nephite nation comes to light in the last days it is a sign that God has already commenced His work of gathering and preparing the world for the return of Christ to rule.

It can be easy for us to make assumptions that just because the Book of Mormon has been around for a while that Christ's coming is immanent. That may or may not be the case. There is much that needs to happen first, and the world still has a long way to fall to be completely ready for a thorough cleansing. If you look at the life of Mormon you will see that as a very young lad they had already started to have civil wars and their society appeared to be falling apart. Yet for all that he led their armies for almost 80 years before they were so wicked that they destroyed themselves. We haven't even begun to see the collapse of all the world's governments, so I wonder just how much longer this will drag on before the Savior comes. It is something to think about. It may happen over a long period of time or it may happen very quickly. I only know that it hasn't happened yet.

Day 5

4 Nephi 1:1-18 - Following the teachings of Jesus Christ leads to unity and happiness.

We talk a lot in the church about being unified. Have you ever tried to figure out why that is so important to our happiness? When people deliberately try to divide us, the motive is so often because they see an opportunity to profit off others because of the division. By pitting people against each other they open opportunities to make money and gain influence. This is all based on selfishness, for the motive is never to prosper others or to help others gain influence.

Today's verses demonstrate to us that ridding life of social strife and personal greed leads to universal happiness and contentment. The only people who are not happy or satisfied with this are those who are selfish and want more for themselves at the expense of others. This first generation who lived during the ministry of Jesus to the people were all saved. Some of their children revolted and took upon themselves the name of Lamanites. And within the life span of the second generation there were those

whose lives were lifted up in pride and they began from that time onward to want to hoard their prosperity for their own benefit. See verses 24-25.

> 24 And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world.
>
> 25 And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them.

Unity, the desire to care for others above our personal desires for comfort is the reason they were so happy. This is the Celestial mindset. This is why Christ defines pure religion as caring for the poor, the widows, orphans, and those who are suffering in some way (James 1:27).

> 27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Personal Study

Record what you're learning.

I don't know if you ever have this happen to you, but sometimes when I read something I run across a word or phrase and "trip" over it. I can't go any further in my reading until I go back and reread what just caused me to pull up short and stop reading. This week one such thought that caused me to stop abruptly in my reading (my tripping) was in verse 26 - "all things are written by the Father".

> 26 And behold, all things are written by the Father; therefore out of the books which shall be written shall the world be judged.

My first thought was "Wow! That's a lot of books!" I can't even imagine how much God accomplishes from hour to hour, yet He records everything. Why? That His judgments will be just. I also thought, "Talk about complete transparency!" God hides nothing. There are no secrets. Everything He does is recorded so it can be reviewed and referred to. He is the definition of "an open book."

Think about how much evil is done with open books and great documentation. Virtually none. Evil is best done in secret or with deceptive records missing information or possessing false information. But God tells us to record all of the truths we discover, to record our experiences and our insights. This is the beginning of our Celestial habit of recording all that happens to us. How many of us would really know anything substantive about our ancestors if they hadn't written letters that were saved or in journals that were preserved and passed down?

I'm not really convinced that we need to write all the intimate details of our life, but we do need to include all the pertinent information. There are many times when it would be very beneficial to us to be able to go back and read about what really happened during a certain event in our life to see if we remember it correctly. The longer we wait after something happens, the greater the likelihood that we remember details incorrectly. Our records need to be current and kept up to date, even if they aren't laden with intimate details, we need to have at least basic information recorded.

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