

Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 220)

LESSON 46: ETHER 7-15

“By Faith All Things Are Fulfilled”

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| Hook | Ether 12 contains some of the most powerful and useful ideas in all of scripture and is probably my favorite chapter in the Book of Mormon. I am excited to explore deeply these profound truths regarding weakness, faith, and love. We are all in for a treat. |
| Goal | More than anything, class members should gain an appreciation for the role of weakness, how we can support each other in our humility and love and thus become strong. |
| Overview | <p>6:28-11:23: The chronicle of Jaredite kings (as Hardy notes in his Reader’s Edition, this account covers the genealogy of 1:6-33 but in reverse order)</p> <p>Ether 12</p> <p>1-5: Introduction to the prophet Ether</p> <p>6-21: Moroni’s treatise on faith</p> <p>22-41: Moroni and Jesus speaking about the Gentiles, book of Mormon, weakness, and coming to Christ</p> <p>13:1-12 The New Jerusalem</p> <p>13:13-22 Ether in hiding (think about parallels between Ether and Moroni)</p> <p>14-15: The end of the Jaredites</p> |
| Main Points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 especially but also 13 are theological centerpieces of this lesson so will focus most of our time there • Faith and Weakness (exploration of Ether 12) • Want to start with Ether 12:27, one of the most profound and important verses in the Book of Mormon. Go over verses 23-26 as a lead up. Make a critical point... it doesn’t say <i>weaknesses</i> in the plural. It says WEAKNESS. So God isn’t saying “I gave you all your flaws, I gave you all these things wrong with you that you need to be depressed about”. They are saying “You are limited. You are weak. You are vulnerable. You aren’t perfect and don’t need to be. You need help. You need our help, and you need to help each other in your weakness. You need to be aware of your shortcomings to be humble, so you love and are gentle and don’t judge and continue to learn. And if you do all these things, your weakness will be a strength” (in addition to other ways our weaknesses become strengths as we learn from them, empathy, wisdom, etc). • Close reading of 12:22-41. • 12:22: We are God’s hands; God uses us to answer prayers (quotes below). Powerful, important point. • 12:33. The love of Christ. The Greek term for this is “agape” which is a selfless love that takes into account what the other person |

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| | <p>needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12:36-37. Another absolutely central point. We love and pray for others, ache for their well-being, but there is a powerful centeredness that comes from knowing we are living according to true principles. “It mattereth not to thee..” • Close reading of 12:1-21 • For Coriantumr, see Omni 1:20-22 • 12:3 “belief in God <i>unto repentance</i>” • 12:4 Beautiful verse, hope and meaning are two of the central contributions of spirituality and religion, desperately needed. Discuss “anchor” “sure and steadfast” and “abounding in good works”—what effective evidence of faith! • 12:6 (cf. Hebrews 11:1). Discuss this point “receive no witness until after the trial of your faith”. This is both empowering but also distresses some who try so hard to get that witness. What if it never comes? • Go over 6-21, good opportunity to have a grounded, productive discussion of faith. • Ether 13 • New Jerusalem and role of America in Mormon theology • 13:9. Beautiful verses. See Rev 21:5 and 2 Cor. 5:17. What a hope for the gospel, “I am making all things new.” The present need not remain enslaved to the past. • 13:11. Cf. Moses 7:63. “And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other;” • 13:11-12. Salvation history. |
| Other Comments/ Discussion Starters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |
| Concluding Points | |

Lectures on faith quote (lectures on Faith were part of the D&C from 1835-1921!)

1:13 “As we receive by faith all temporal blessings that we do receive, so we in like manner receive by faith all spiritual blessings that we do receive. But faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or on earth...”

Vulnerability: Terryl and Fiona Givens, *The God Who Weeps*, 21.

“Certainly we all...would prefer to worship a God who is merciful and tender in contrast to one who is wrathful and unyielding. But the implications can be troubling....Tenderness suggests sensitivity. A loving heart, like an exposed nerve, is by definition susceptible to pain. Do we really want to believe in a God who is thus exposed, unshielded from human sin and evil?” (I have talked with my children about how God is “happy-sad”, at all times full of both joy and sorrow. This is the price of love and caring for others.

Also see the work of Brene Brown:

http://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability.html

<http://www.onbeing.org/program/brene-brown-on-vulnerability/4928>

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/1592407331>

We are God’s hands:

Holland, October 2008, “The ministry of angels” <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2008/10/the-ministry-of-angels?lang=eng>

I have spoken here of heavenly help, of angels dispatched to bless us in time of need. But when we speak of those who are instruments in the hand of God, we are reminded that not all angels are from the other side of the veil. Some of them we walk with and talk with—here, now, every day. Some of them reside in our own neighborhoods. Some of them gave birth to us, and in my case, one of them consented to marry me. Indeed heaven never seems closer than when we see the love of God manifested in the kindness and devotion of people so good and so pure that *angelic* is the only word that comes to mind.

Uchtdorf, May 2010, “You are my hands” <http://www.lds.org/ensign/2010/05/you-are-my-hands>

When I think of the Savior, I often picture Him with hands outstretched, reaching out to comfort, heal, bless, and love. And He always talked *with*, never *down to*, people. He loved the humble and the meek and walked among them, ministering to them and offering hope and salvation...As we emulate His perfect example, our hands can become His hands; our eyes, His eyes; our heart, His heart...

With this in mind, let our hearts and hands be stretched out in compassion toward others, for everyone is walking his or her own difficult path. As disciples of Jesus Christ, our Master, we are

called to support and heal rather than condemn. We are commanded “to mourn with those that mourn” and “comfort those that stand in need of comfort...”

True love requires action. We can speak of love all day long—we can write notes or poems that proclaim it, sing songs that praise it, and preach sermons that encourage it—but until we manifest that love in action, our words are nothing but “sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” ¹¹ Christ did not just speak about love; He showed it each day of His life. He did not remove Himself from the crowd. Being amidst the people, Jesus reached out to the one. He rescued the lost. He didn’t just teach a class about reaching out in love and then delegate the actual work to others. He not only taught but also showed us how to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.” ¹²

Christ knows how to minister to others perfectly. When the Savior stretches out His hands, those He touches are uplifted and become greater, stronger, and better people as a result.

If we are His hands, should we not do the same?

President Monson: “I know of no experience more sweet or feeling more precious than to heed a prompting only to discover that the Lord has answered another person’s prayer through you.”
(<http://www.lds.org/general-conference/print/2002/10/peace-be-still?lang=eng>)

“God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another mortal that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other...” Spencer Kimball (Teachings of SWK (2006) p. 82)

(depending on age and audience you could also cite Jewel’s song “Hands” ☺)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfsS3pIDBfw>

Lyrics: <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/jewel/hands.html>

Link to RadioLab, “The Good Show” (will inspire you and make you cry)

<http://www.radiolab.org/2010/dec/14/>