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H. Dean Garrett

God's commandment that the brother of Jared build vessels to cross the oceans to the new land presented many difficult and seemingly insurmountable problems. However, through diligence and obedience, the prophet overcame the arising problems until he was faced with the challenge of providing light for vessels which could have no windows. This problem seemed unsolvable for the brother of Jared and he cried, "O Lord, behold, I have done even as thou hast commanded me; and I have prepared the vessels for my people, and behold there is no light in them. Behold, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that we shall cross this great water in darkness?" (Ether 2:22). The Lord's response to him is very revealing, because it placed the responsibility of providing possible solutions squarely on the brother of Jared: "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?" (v 23).

Like the brother of Jared, each of us faces challenges in life. At times we may plead with the Lord: "Will ye have me go through this life without light to understand why things are the way they are?" His answer to us might be the same question he asked the brother of Jared: "What would ye that I should do to put light into your spiritual vessels?" The brother of Jared provided stones and asked the Lord to touch them with his fingers to produce light for their vessels. We, too, must provide stones that the Lord can touch to give light to our spiritual vessels. The Book of Mormon teaches that the foundation stones for our spiritual growth are faith, hope, and charity. Mormon indicates that without these three qualities, especially charity, we are

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nothing (Moroni 7:44). It is through faith, hope, and charity that we are brought to Christ (Ether 12:28). Having these three characteristics enabled the brother of Jared, not only to solve his problem, but also qualified him to see the finger of the Lord and to have the extraordinary experience of viewing the spiritual body of the Lord as no other person had. If we are to return to God's presence, we, too, like the brother of Jared, must develop the qualities of faith, hope, and charity.

Faith

Faith was the foundation for the spiritual development that led the brother of Jared to success. Through faith he saw the finger of God (Ether 12:21). Because of the faith that the brother of Jared developed "the Lord could not withhold anything from his sight, wherefore he showed him all things, for he could no longer be kept without the veil" (v 21). It was by this same powerful faith that he was able to say to the mountain Zerin, "Remove—and it was removed. And if he had not had faith it would not have moved" (v 30).

To have faith is "not to have a perfect knowledge of things" (Alma 32:21), but rather it is the power by which things which "are hoped for and not seen" (Ether 12:6). True faith is focused in and on God and his Son, Jesus Christ. "Faith in Him is more than mere acknowledgment that He Lives. It is more than professing belief. Faith in Jesus Christ consists of complete reliance on Him. . . . Faith in Him means believing that even though we do not understand all things, He does" (Benson, *Teachings* 66). We, therefore, should look to Him "in every thought," for by so doing we doubt not, neither do we fear (D&C 6:36).

Alma taught that faith comes from a desire for knowledge, a hope that things are true. Cultivation of that desire leads to a confirmation of truth which then turns to faith, which, as Elder Oaks has said, "is developed in a setting where we cannot see what lies ahead" (122). It rests on the experience of the past while it focuses on the hope of the future. As we develop faith, it becomes an assurance that the events that transpire will, in the end, produce the desired results. True faith must be centered in that Being who is unmovable and totally reliable. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that three things are necessary for an individual to exercise faith that will lead to salvation.

First, the idea that he [God] actually exists. Secondly, a *correct* idea of his character, perfections, and attributes. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his [God's] will. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding, it can become perfect and fruitful abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (*Lectures on Faith* 3:3–5; hereafter *LF*)

This faith is exemplified in the life of the brother of Jared. Because the brother of Jared knew the characteristics and qualities of God and understood that his life was in accordance with God's will, the Lord showed himself unto him and said: "Because thou knowest these things, ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore, ye are brought back into my presence; therefore, I show myself unto you" (Ether 3:13).

Moroni teaches that God works in the lives of people after they have faith in him (Ether 12:30-31). He testifies that "it was by faith that Christ showed himself unto our fathers, after he had risen from the dead." However, the Lord did not show "himself unto them until *after* they had faith in him; wherefore, it must needs be that some had faith in him, for he showed Himself not unto the world" (v 7; emphasis added). This same qualification of faith also applied to the Savior's disciples. Moroni tells us that only "after they had faith and did speak in [his] name, [Christ] didst show [himself] unto them in great power" (v 31). The brother of Jared also had to show his faith before he could see the Lord. After he showed him his finger, the Lord asked him: "Sawest thou more than this?" He answered: "Nay, Lord, show thyself unto me." The Lord responded: "Believest thou the words which I shall speak?" The brother of Jared answered: "Yea, Lord, I know thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie" (3:9–12). His faith allowed the veil to be lifted and the brother of Jared to see the spirit body of the Lord.

Faith becomes "the principle of action in all intelligent beings" (*LF* 1:9). It is the power by which things happen. "Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me" (Moroni 7:33). Moroni taught that it was by faith that the law of Moses was given and that Christ also appeared to the Nephites because of their great faith (Ether 12:1, 7). In addition, "it was the faith of Alma and Amulek that caused the prison to tumble to

the earth. Behold, it was the faith of Nephi and Lehi that wrought the change upon the Lamanites, that they were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost” (Ether 12:13–14). Miracles transpire because of faith (v 12), and men of old were called to “the holy order of God” (v 10) by faith. Above all, it was by faith that the “more excellent way” (the Atonement) was fulfilled (v 11).

Moreover, modern scripture notes that without faith “no man can please God” (D&C 63:11). The reason for this is that “we are saved by faith in his name; and by faith [we] become the sons [and daughters] of God” (Moroni 7:26). Those who have faith in Christ “will cleave unto every good thing” (v 28). Therefore, Moroni forcefully states: “If ye have not faith in him then ye are not fit to be numbered among the people of his church” (v 39). Faith is the foundation stone for all of our spiritual growth.

Hope

The brother of Jared received through his faith an assurance of his relationship with the Savior. Through his faith-building experiences, he developed a hope in Christ. True faith becomes the foundation for hope. “If a man has faith he must needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope” (Moroni 7:42). Moroni understood this when he stated that those who “believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God” (Ether 12:4). He also realized that faith leads to an understanding of the future in such a way that a personal assurance of possibilities exists for individuals.

The hope spoken of in the Book of Mormon is very personal. It is one thing to believe that we humans can gain exaltation; it is an altogether different thing to believe that you, personally, can achieve exaltation. When we transfer that belief and faith from the general to the personal, then we function by hope. Notice, both Paul and Moroni teach that hope comes of faith and is the anchor of the soul (Heb 6:19; Ether 12:4).

Moreover, hope is centered “through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise” (Moroni 7:41).

Once we come to the knowledge that Jesus Christ is our personal Savior and that we are proceeding along the path that leads to exaltation, there comes an assurance—a hope—that we can achieve exaltation. Thus, hope is not “a flimsy, ethereal desire, one without assurance that the desired consummation will be received but a desire coupled with full expectation of receiving the coveted reward” (McConkie 365).

Moroni recognized that this type of hope would become the “anchor to the souls of men which would make them sure and steadfast” (Ether 12:4). This hope does not allow for wavering or hesitation. In fact, once we have an “unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save,” then it is necessary that we “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope” (2 Nephi 31:19–20).

This hope in Christ strengthens us through our trials and tribulations. It is the hope that allows us to be “patient in tribulation” (D&C 54:10). In all that comes into our lives, such brightness of hope allows the growth and development of the soul. This is possible because it is based on goodness and righteousness. It is centered on the source of all goodness. One of the fruits of this type of hope is the desire “to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). Elder Neal A. Maxwell has taught, “Since, for instance, despair cometh because of iniquity, then true hope cometh because of righteousness” (“Not Withstanding” 48). Moroni concludes, “If ye have no hope ye must be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity” (Moroni 10:22). Because it results from righteousness, hope reinforces the faith that allows us to face the trials and challenges of life. Thus, we are able to press forward with a brightness of hope.

In his own personal life, Moroni relied on his hope in Christ that came from his great faith. He was very concerned that the Gentiles would mock his writings which he viewed as weak. Through his hope, or the assurance of his own relationship with Christ, he accepted the Lord’s response that he would make “weak things become strong” unto those who have faith in him; and Moroni was not to worry about the Gentiles (Ether 12:27).

We must have this hope, which Moroni called “a more excellent hope,” or we “cannot receive an inheritance in the place which [God] hast prepared” for us (Ether 12:32). This type of hope is the product of a “meek and lowly” heart (Moroni 7:43). Pride is a destroyer of

hope, for pride is centered in self and worldly things, things that are temporary and fleeting. To be righteous and full of hope, we must consider ourselves “fools before God, and come down in the depths of humility” (2 Nephi 9:42). This depth of humility allows us to reach out of ourselves to God and his children and to develop love like that that Christ possesses. This Christlike love becomes the motivator of our actions. It comes from the faith and hope that we have in the mission and atonement of Christ. Moroni understood this when he “prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity” (Ether 12:36). Increased faith and hope allows the atonement of Christ to function in our lives, and that develops charity in us.

Charity

Faith and hope lead to the development of charity, the third part of the triad of spiritual growth. Charity, which is focused on the Savior and our love for him, cannot be developed in any sense without the foundation of faith and hope. By definition, charity is “the highest, noblest, strongest kind of love not merely affection” (Bible Dictionary 632.) This love is more than just a willingness to share time or possessions with another human being; rather, it is a deep and lasting devotion for and to God and his Son (Mormon 7:47). Thus, more than an act, charity is an attitude, a state of heart and mind that accompanies our works and is proffered unceasingly (1 Cor 13:4–7; D&C 121:45). It follows faith and hope, but surpasses them in importance (1 Cor 13:13; *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 1:264). Charity is best illustrated by Christ’s own actions, for he so loved his Father that he did whatsoever his Father required, even to the suffering and giving of his own life for the spiritual lives of his Father’s children. Mormon characterizes charity as “the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47).

Moroni further explains the pure love of Christ or charity when he declares:

I remember that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world, that thou mightest take it again to prepare a place for the children of men. And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father. (Ether 12:33–34)

For us to acquire charity requires at least two things. First, we must “love the Lord thy God with all [our] heart, with all [our] might, mind and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ [we] shalt serve him.” The second requirement is like unto the first: “[We] shalt love [our] neighbor as [ourselves]” (D&C 59:5–6; Matt 12:37–40). True charity develops from love—love for God, the Lawgiver, and for his children. Without this basis of love, we cannot possess charity. Even if we were to give all that we have, if we do not give for the love of God, it is not charity. Consequently, an atheist, although he may love, cannot have charity.

Therefore, Mormon counsels that we should “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ” (Moroni 7:48). Certain characteristics accompany this gift from God:

Charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (Moroni 7:45)

These characteristics are all fruits of the love that we have for God and his children. This love is completely different from the love spoken of in the world. President Benson observed:

The world today speaks a great deal about love, and it is sought for by many. But the pure love of Christ differs greatly from what the world thinks of love. Charity never seeks selfish gratification. The pure love of Christ seeks only the eternal growth and joy of others. (“Godly Characteristics” 47)

Because this love is focused on the Eternal God, it endures forever and never fails (Moroni 7:46–47).

Having charity is so critical for spiritual growth that Mormon declares that if we do not have it, we are “nothing” (Moroni 7:44). Without charity, or the pure love of Christ, we “can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God” (10:21). We are, therefore, commanded to “clothe [ourselves] with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace” (D&C 88:125). The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible helps us see that Peter’s counsel to the Former-day Saints echoes this command when he wrote, “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity preventeth a multitude of sins” (JST 1 Peter 4:8).

Moroni's charity motivated him to plead that if the Gentiles have the privilege of reading his words, the Lord would give them "grace that they might have charity" (Ether 12:36-37). The Lord's response to this request was very comforting for He informed Moroni not to worry whether the Gentiles had charity because he had "been faithful, wherefore thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father" (v 37). Thus, the fruits of his charity became a reality in the life of Moroni.

The centrality of charity to spiritual growth led Hugh Nibley to ask the following questions:

What, then is holding us back? Why are so few willing to let faith and hope lead them? There is a serious obstacle here, for a man "cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be meek, and lowly of heart . . . and if a man be meek and lowly in heart . . . he must have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity" (Moroni 7:43-44). Both Mormon and Moroni come back unerringly to charity as the key to the whole business; it was for lack of charity that their people were destroyed, charity is "the greatest of all" without which "all things must fail" (Moroni 7:46). No demonstration of its existence is necessary; it "is the pure love of Christ," the irreducible quantity in the universe, as mysterious and undeniable as consciousness itself; without it we are impatient, unkind, envious, puffed up, self-seeking, touchy, suspicious, irritable, distrustful, skeptical, and intolerant (Moroni 7:47), in a word, incapable of seeking truth in any field. (7:404)

The Light of Our Vessels

Not only were the Jaredite sailing vessels filled with light, but the brother of Jared's spiritual vessel was also illuminated with the light of Christ which filled his whole body (D&C 88:67). Because of his great faith, hope, and charity, the brother of Jared was able to face the challenges of his life, although he lived a difficult one. The wicked environment from which the family of Jared had to flee, the challenges of traveling through the wilderness "into that quarter where there never had man been" (Ether 2:5) are just two of the challenges he and his family faced. Because of his charity, his pure love of Christ, he was able to bear, believe, hope, and endure all things (Moroni 7:45). In addition, it may have been through the things that

the brother of Jared suffered that he developed his strong faith. The Prophet Joseph Smith understood this principle:

Let us here observe that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation. . . . When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do His will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering and that he has not sought nor will he seek His face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life. (*LF* 6:7)

Paul affirmed this by declaring, “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope” (Rom 5:3–4). Submitting to whatsoever God placed upon him showed the brother of Jared to be “meek and lowly in heart”; and “if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must have charity” (Moroni 7:44).

The brother of Jared’s faith, hope, and charity brought many blessings into his life. So great was his faith that the Savior could not keep the veil between them. The Lord also answered his pleading not to confound the language of the families and friends of Jared. The Lord spoke to the brother of Jared in the valley of Nimrod and guided him and his family to a land of promise. It may even have been these same qualities of faith, hope, and charity that allowed the Lord to talk with the brother of Jared for three hours, and chasten him “because he remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord” (Ether 2:14). These are the same qualities that allowed the Lord to show him “all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sights, even unto the ends of the earth” (3:25). Elder Neal A. Maxwell notes that, “Great faith, born of doing simple things, is the key to much that matters. When we give place in our lives for developing such faith, this faith facilitates the development of other vital qualities [such as hope and charity] and outcomes as well” (*Men and Women of Christ* 96).

Like the brother of Jared, we can also follow the pattern that will develop the triad of faith, hope, and charity. We can develop the faith that will allow our eyes to be single to the glory of God. We can come to understand that “only Jesus Christ is uniquely qualified to provide that hope, that confidence, and that strength to overcome the world

and rise above our human failings. To do that, we must place our faith in [Christ] and live by His laws and teachings” (Benson, “Jesus Christ” 5). The strength of our faith from which our hope and charity will spring determines greatly the wellsprings of our spiritual understanding and commitment.

Development of Faith, Hope, and Charity

The development of faith, hope, and charity is a very personal endeavor based on our testimony of God, the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ. It is focused on the atonement of Christ as a personal atonement. Therefore, the development of these three characteristics comes by personal effort. Jacob declared: “Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses, we obtain a hope; and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the seas” (Jacob 4:6). This personal search of the writings of the prophets and the reception of the revelation leads to a development and strengthening of faith, hope, and charity. Elder Marion G. Romney affirms this when he promises:

I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase, mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to that counsel. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness. (436)

As we receive the blessings from this type of living, we increase in spiritual sensitivity and then become candidates for the gifts of the Spirit, including the gifts of faith, hope, and charity. It is important to note that without the Spirit, we cannot develop these characteristics. Paul taught that “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit . . .” (1 Cor 12:7–9). We are taught an example of this gift in latter-day revelations: “To some it is given by the Holy

Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world. To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful” (D&C 46:13–14). Thus, the basis for the attainment of faith, hope and charity is the Holy Ghost and the personal efforts that are required to attain the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

The more we become qualified for the companionship of the Holy Ghost through righteous living, the more we receive the gifts of faith, hope, and charity. The Lord told Hyrum Smith he had two major responsibilities to perform before he could go forth and preach the gospel. The first was “to keep my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind, and strength,” and the second was to “seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word” (D&C 11:20–21). The combination of obedience and scripture study allows us to obtain the gifts of the Holy Ghost that develop and strengthen this triad of faith, hope, and charity. Elder Bruce R. McConkie understood this when he was quoted in the *Church News* as saying:

I think that people who study the scriptures get a dimension to their life that nobody else gets and that can't be gained in any way except by studying the scriptures. There's an increase in faith and a desire to do what's right and a feeling of inspiration and understanding that comes to people who study the gospel—meaning particularly the standard works—who ponder the principles, that can't come in any other way. (“Spare Times's Rare” 4)

This triad of characteristics did not come to the brother of Jared without effort. Likewise, it will only become the fuel of our spiritual vessels with conscientious effort and devotion.

Conclusion

Faith, hope, and charity cannot really be separated. They act in concert, one with the others. They are the forces that enabled the brother of Jared to have light in the sailing vessels and also in his own spiritual vessel. Because the brother of Jared had great faith, he was filled with hope and perfect love. He maintained and strengthened these qualities through his prayers and diligence in keeping the commandments. Having all three kept his spiritual vessel illuminated.

Mormon understood the interrelationships between faith, hope, and charity. He taught that the first fruits of repentance is baptism:

Baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins. And remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God. (Moroni 7:25–26)

Having faith, hope, and charity will also give light to our vessels, and power, direction, and progression in our lives. These characteristics become the seedbed of all our good qualities. “Thus we see not only centrality but also the needed constancy of these qualities” (Maxwell, “Men and Women of Christ” 53).

In a despairing world that lacks faith and where “the love of men shall wax cold and iniquity shall abound” (D&C 45:27), developing faith, hope, and charity to provide spiritual light in our personal vessels is a necessity. “Events can shake us, bring on despair, and cause us to shrivel up in our capacity to love—unless we have faith and love based on truths that are relevant not only now but in eternity!” (Maxwell, “For the Power” 61–62).

The desire to know eternal truths leads to faith; and if we develop faith, we will have hope in Christ. With hope, we become candidates for charity—the pure love of Christ. The brother of Jared followed this path as did Mormon and Moroni. No single event is recorded that illustrates the charity of the brother of Jared. However, the relationship that he developed with the Lord expresses that quality. The brother of Jared exhibited great love for the Savior by his devotion and commitment to serve and obey him. So must we. We must

pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that [we] may become the [children] of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. (Moroni 7:48)

Above all things, “[we must] clothe [ourselves] with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace” (D&C 88:125) so that we, like the brother of Jared, can enjoy the presence of the Lord.

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