

CHAPTER 54

Moroni 7

Introduction

Here we read Mormon's powerful sermon as recorded by his son Moroni. Previous to Moroni 7, Mormon's scriptural work consisted primarily of abridging other prophets' writings. Here we read Mormon's powerful sermon that he gave to a righteous group of Church members (see Moroni 7:2–3). Mormon taught Saints who lived in a spiritually deteriorating society how to draw closer to God. This discourse emphasizes the need for proper motivation or intent in our actions, how to discern between good and evil, and the important relationship between faith, hope, and charity.

Commentary

Moroni 7:2–3. “The Rest of the Lord”

• The scriptures often speak of “the rest of the Lord.” After quoting Moroni 7:3, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) wrote:

“This is a very significant passage. The rest here referred to is not physical rest, for there is no such thing as physical rest in the Church of Jesus Christ. Reference is made to the spiritual rest and peace which are born from a settled conviction of the truth in the minds of men. We may thus enter into the rest of the Lord today, by coming to an understanding of the truths of the gospel. . . . Not all need to seek this rest, for there are many who now possess it, whose minds have become satisfied, and who have set their eyes upon the mark of their high calling with an invincible determination in their hearts to be steadfast in the truth, and who are treading in humility and righteousness the path marked out for the Saints who are complacent followers of Jesus Christ. . . .

“I thank our Father that I have come to a knowledge of this truth, that I know that Jesus is the Christ, in whom alone there is rest and salvation. As God lives, they are deceived who follow men and their philosophies; but happy are they who enter into the rest of the peaceable followers of Christ, obtaining sufficient hope from this time henceforth until they shall rest with him in heaven” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 126, 128).

MORONI 7:3–4

What does it mean to be a “peaceable follower” of Christ and to have a “peaceable walk”? (see also D&C 19:23).

Moroni 7:6–9. “With Real Intent”

• Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that all people have numerous opportunities to give the gift of service to their fellowmen and that their motives in serving are all-important:

“Numerous scriptures teach that our Heavenly Father knows our thoughts and the intents of our heart. (See D&C 6:16; Mosiah 24:12; Alma 18:32.) The prophet [Mormon] taught that if our works are to be credited for good, they must be done for the right reasons. . . .

“. . . Scriptures make clear that in order to purify our service in the Church and to our fellowmen, it is necessary to consider not only *how* we serve, but also *why* we serve.

“People serve one another for different reasons, and some reasons are better than others. . . . We should all strive to serve for the reasons that are highest and best.

“. . . By way of illustration, and without pretending to be exhaustive, I will suggest six reasons. I will discuss these in ascending order from the lesser to the greater reasons for service.

“[1] Some may serve for hope of earthly reward. . . .

“[2] Another reason for service— . . . to obtain good companionship. . . .

“[3] Some may serve out of fear of punishment. . . .

“[4] Other persons may serve out of a sense of duty or out of loyalty to friends or family or traditions. . . .

“[5] One such higher reason for service is the hope of an eternal reward. . . .

“[6] . . . The highest reason of all. . . . Charity. . . .

“. . . It is not enough to serve God with all of our *might and strength*. He who looks into our hearts and knows

our minds demands more than this. In order to stand blameless before God at the last day, we must also serve him with all our *heart and mind*.

“Service with all of our heart and mind is a high challenge for all of us. Such service must be free of selfish ambition. It must be motivated only by the pure love of Christ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 13–16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 12–15).



- President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) of the First Presidency shared the following personal experience regarding the importance of pure motives for doing righteous things:

“About a quarter of a century ago Sister Romney and I moved into a ward in which they were just beginning to build a meetinghouse. The size of the contribution the bishop thought I ought to contribute rather staggered me. I thought it was at least twice as much as he should have asked. However, I had just been called to a rather high Church position, so I couldn’t very well [say no]. Therefore, I said, ‘Well, I will pay it, Bishop, but I will have to pay it in installments because I don’t have the money.’ And so I began to pay. And I paid and paid until I was down to about the last three payments, when, as is my habit, I was reading The Book of Mormon, and came to the scripture which said:

“... If a man . . . giveth a gift . . . grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God.’ (Moroni 7:8.)

“This shocked me because I was out about a thousand dollars. Well, I went on and paid the three installments I had promised to pay, and then I paid several more installments to convince the Lord that I had done it with the right attitude” (“Mother Eve, a Worthy Exemplar,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Feb. 1968, 84–85).

- President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency taught that praying with real intent includes a willingness to obey whatever instructions come from

the Lord: “The young Joseph Smith showed us how to pray that way. He believed in the promise he read in the book of James. He went to the grove with faith that his prayer would be answered. He wanted to know which church to join. He was submissive enough to be ready to do whatever he was told to do. So he prayed, as we must, already committed to obey” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2003, 95; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 90).

Moroni 7:12–19. The Light of Christ

- The Bible Dictionary provides the following explanation:

“The light of Christ is just what the words imply: enlightenment, knowledge, and an uplifting, ennobling, preserving influence that comes upon mankind because of Jesus Christ. For instance, Christ is ‘the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world’ (D&C 93:2; John 1:9). The light of Christ fills the ‘immensity of space’ and is the means by which Christ is able to be ‘in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things.’ It ‘giveth life to all things’ and is ‘the law by which all things are governed.’ It is also ‘the light that quickeneth’ man’s understanding (see D&C 88:6–13, 41). In this manner, the light of Christ is related to man’s conscience and tells him right from wrong (see Moro. 7:12–19).

“The light of Christ should not be confused with the personage of the Holy Ghost, for the light of Christ is not a personage at all. Its influence is preliminary to and preparatory to one’s receiving the Holy Ghost. The light of Christ will lead the honest soul who ‘hearkeneth to the voice’ to find the true gospel and the true Church and thereby receive the Holy Ghost (see D&C 84:46–48)” (“Light of Christ,” 725; see also Guide to the Scriptures, “Light of Christ”; *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 96).

- “Conscience is a manifestation of the Light of Christ, enabling us to judge good from evil” (*True to the Faith*, 96). The “Spirit of Christ” (Moroni 7:16) and the “light of Christ” (vv. 18–19) are scriptural phrases that are often used synonymously.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified that this light is a gift that will help us discern between good and evil:

“Regardless of whether this inner light, this knowledge of right and wrong, is called the Light of Christ, moral sense, or conscience, it can direct us to moderate our actions—unless, that is, we subdue it or silence it. . . .

“Every man, woman, and child of every nation, creed, or color—everyone, no matter where they live or what they believe or what they do—has within them the imperishable Light of Christ” (“The Light of Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2005, 8, 10).

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) identified some differences between the Holy Ghost and the Light of Christ:

“The Holy Ghost should not be confused with the Spirit which fills the immensity of space and which is everywhere present. This other Spirit is impersonal and has no size, nor dimension; it proceeds forth from the presence of the Father and the Son and is in all things. We should speak of the Holy Ghost as a personage as ‘he’ and this other Spirit as ‘it,’ although when we speak of the power or gift of the Holy Ghost we may properly say ‘it.’

“The Holy Ghost, as we are taught in our modern revelation, is the third member in the Godhead and a personage of Spirit. These terms are used synonymously: Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit of Truth, Holy Spirit, Comforter; all having reference to the Holy Ghost. The same terms largely are used in relation to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, also called the Light of Truth, Light of Christ, Spirit of God, and Spirit of the Lord; and yet they are separate and distinct things. We have a great deal of confusion because we have not kept that clearly in our minds” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:49–50).

- God’s inspiration through the Light of Christ is not limited to the members of this Church only. The Light of Christ has influenced many world leaders.

“The First Presidency has stated:

“The great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God’s light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals. . . .

“We believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation’ (*Statement of the First Presidency regarding God’s Love for All Mankind*, 15 Feb. 1978)” (James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 15; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 12).

- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained a relationship between the Light of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost:

“Each of us brings a light to the earth—the Light of Christ. . . .

“By using the Light of Christ to discern and choose what is right, we can be led to an even greater light: the gift of the Holy Ghost” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 80; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 70).

Moroni 7:17. Inspiration from Unworthy Sources

- Satan has the ability to give false revelations to those who try to force or pressure revelation. Communication from Satan will always lead away from Christ. President Boyd K. Packer counseled us regarding these false spiritual messages:

“Be ever on guard lest you be deceived by inspiration from an unworthy source. You can be given false spiritual messages. There are counterfeit spirits just as there are counterfeit angels. (See Moro. 7:17.) Be careful lest you be deceived, for the devil may come disguised as an angel of light.

“The spiritual part of us and the emotional part of us are so closely linked that it is possible to mistake an emotional impulse for something spiritual. We occasionally find people who receive what they assume to be spiritual promptings from God, when those promptings are either centered in the emotions or are from the adversary” (“The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 55–56).

Moroni 7:19–25. “Lay Hold upon Every Good Thing”

- Mormon taught that faith is the key to laying hold on every good thing (see Moroni 7:25). In explaining how to “lay hold upon every good thing” by faith, the Relief Society visiting teaching message taught:

“Building personal testimony is a matter of desire and of making choices that increase our faith and hope. As we desire to ‘lay hold upon every good thing,’ we of necessity choose actions that increase our faith:

“We set aside meaningful time for prayer.

“We remember and renew our covenants regularly through partaking of the sacrament and visiting the temple.

“We use the scriptures as a personal road map to guide us in our actions.

“We cultivate friendships with people who help us build our testimonies.

“We make service part of our daily routine.”



“Lay Hold upon Every Good Thing,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1991, 70).

• While serving in the general Primary presidency, Sister Michaelene P. Grassli said that when we do good we align ourselves with God: “We can train our spiritual senses the same way so that we can recognize our Heavenly Father’s will for us. We train our spiritual senses by doing good things. We are taught to ‘search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.’ (Moro. 7:19.)” (“Follow Him,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 93).

MORONI 7:22–32

How do the principles discussed in these verses help us to “lay hold upon every good thing”?

Moroni 7:29–31. Ministering Angels

• Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that the Book of Mormon reveals the reality of angels:

“I am convinced that one of the profound themes of the Book of Mormon is the role and prevalence and central participation of angels in the gospel story. . . .

“One of the things that will become more important in our lives the longer we live is the reality of angels, their work and their ministry. I refer here not alone to the angel Moroni but also to those more personal ministering angels who are with us and around us, empowered to help us and who do exactly that (see 3 Ne. 7:18; Moro. 7:29–32, 37; D&C 107:20). . . .

“I believe we need to speak of and believe in and bear testimony to the ministry of angels more than we sometimes do. They constitute one of God’s great methods of witnessing through the veil, and no document in all this world teaches that principle so clearly and so powerfully as does the Book of Mormon” (“For a Wise Purpose,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1996, 16–17).

• Elder Bruce C. Hafen of the Seventy taught that angels still continue to minister to the children of man:

“The ministry of these *unseen* angels is among the most sublime forms of interaction between heaven and earth, powerfully expressing God’s concern for us and bestowing tangible assurance and spiritual sustenance upon those in great need. . . .

“When do the angels come? If we seek to be worthy, they are near us when we need them most” (“When Do the Angels Come?” *Ensign*, Apr. 1992, 12, 16).

MORONI 7:29–31

Specifically what is the mission of ministering angels?

Moroni 7:32–39. Faith in Jesus Christ

• Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled us on what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ:

“To gain unshakable faith in Jesus Christ is to flood your life with brilliant light. You are no longer alone to struggle with challenges you know you cannot resolve or control yourself, for He said, ‘*If ye will have faith*

in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is *expedient in me* (Moroni 7:33; italics added).

“If you are despondent, racked by transgression, are ill, alone, or desperately in need of comfort and support, I solemnly testify that the Lord will help you when you carefully obey the spiritual law upon which that help is predicated. He is your Father. You are His child. He loves you. He will never let you down. I know He will bless you” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 86).

Moroni 7:40–44. Hope

- Mormon spoke of a hope that comes from or is born of faith in Christ (see Mormon 7:40, 42). Hope, centered in the life and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, has the power to lift us above any adversity we may face. President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency taught that hope brings peace into a troubled life:

“There are tremendous sources of hope beyond our own ability, learning, strength, and capacity. Among them is the gift of the Holy Ghost. Through the marvelous blessing of this member of the Godhead, we can come to ‘know the truth of all things’ [Moroni 10:5].

“Hope is the anchor of our souls. I know of no one who is not in need of hope—young or old, strong or weak, rich or poor. In the Book of Mormon we are exhorted, ‘Wherefore, whoso 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; italics added]. . . .

“Everybody in this life has challenges and difficulties. That is part of our mortal test. The reason for some of these trials cannot be readily understood except on the basis of faith and hope because there is often a larger purpose which we do not always understand. Peace comes through hope” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 73; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 59).

- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that we can have hope, because divine assistance is always available

to us: “Even when the winds of adversity blow, our Father keeps us anchored to our hope. The Lord has promised, ‘I will not leave you comfortless,’ [John 14:18] and He will ‘consecrate [our] afflictions for [our] gain.’ [2 Nephi 2:2.] Even when our trials seem overwhelming, we can draw strength and hope from the sure promise of the Lord: ‘Be not afraid nor dismayed . . . ; for the battle is not yours, but God’s’ [2 Chronicles 20:15]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 33; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 27).

Moroni 7:43–44. “Meek, and Lowly of Heart”

- Bishop H. David Burton of the Presiding Bishopric described the virtues and process of obtaining meekness: “Meekness is vital to becoming more Christlike. Without it one cannot develop other important virtues. Mormon indicated, ‘None is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart’ (Moroni 7:44). Acquiring meekness is a process. We are asked to ‘take up [the] cross daily’ (Luke 9:23). Our lifting should not be an occasional exercise. More meekness does not translate to weakness, but ‘it is the presentation of self in a posture of *kindness* and *gentleness*. It reflects certitude, strength, serenity; it reflects a healthy self-esteem and a genuine self-control’ (Neal A. Maxwell, “Meekly Drenched in Destiny,” in *Brigham Young University 1982–83 Fireside and Devotional Speeches* [1983], 2). More meekness will allow us to be tutored by the Spirit” (in Conference Report Oct. 2004, 104–5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 99).

Moroni 7:44. Faith, Hope, and Charity

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the relationship between the important truths of faith, hope, and charity:

“The Apostle Paul taught that three divine principles form a foundation upon which we can build the structure of our lives. They are faith, hope, and charity. (See 1 Corinthians 13:13.) Together they give us a base of support like the legs of a three-legged stool. Each principle is significant within itself, but each also plays an important supporting role. Each is incomplete without the others. Hope helps faith develop. Likewise, true faith gives birth to hope. When we begin to lose hope, we are faltering also in our measure of faith. The

principles of faith and hope working together must be accompanied by charity, which is the greatest of all. According to Mormon, ‘charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever’ (Moroni 7:47). It is the perfect manifestation of our faith and hope.

“Working together, these three eternal principles will help give us the broad eternal perspective we need to face life’s toughest challenges, including the prophesied ordeals of the last days. Real faith fosters hope for the future; it allows us to look beyond ourselves and our present cares. Fortified by hope, we are moved to demonstrate the pure love of Christ through daily acts of obedience and Christian service” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 44; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 33).

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how the qualities of faith, hope, and charity are completely tied to Jesus Christ:

“Unsurprisingly the triad of faith, hope, and charity, which brings us to Christ, has strong and converging linkage: faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ, hope is in His atonement, and charity is the ‘pure love of Christ’ (see Ether 12:28; Moroni 7:47). Each of these attributes qualifies us for the celestial kingdom (see Moroni 10:20–21; Ether 12:34). Each, first of all, requires us to be meek and lowly (see Moroni 7:39, 43).

“Faith and hope are constantly interactive and may not always be precisely distinguished or sequenced. Though not perfect knowledge either, hope’s enlivened expectations are ‘with surety’ true (Ether 12:4; see also Romans 8:24; Hebrews 11:1; Alma 32:21). In the geometry of restored theology, hope has a greater circumference than faith. If faith increases, the perimeter of hope stretches correspondingly” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 45; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 35).

Moroni 7:44–48. Charity: The Pure Love of Christ

- Some view charity as something we can gain on our own through deliberate efforts and specific actions. Obtaining the love of Christ, however, requires the help and blessings of our Heavenly Father. The prophet Mormon urged us to seek charity and to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart”; then this love is

“bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ” (Moroni 7:48).

Elder Robert J. Whetten of the Seventy explained: “Like faith, Christlike love is a gift of the Spirit, is granted upon the principles of personal righteousness and in accordance to our level of obedience to the laws upon which it is predicated. And like faith, love must be exercised to grow” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 37; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 30).

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks described charity and what one must do to obtain it: “Charity, ‘the pure love of Christ’ (Moroni 7:47), is not an *act* but a *condition* or state of being. Charity is attained through a succession of acts that result in a conversion. Charity is something one becomes. Thus, as Moroni declared, ‘except men shall *have* charity they cannot inherit’ the place prepared for them in the mansions of the Father (Ether 12:34; italics added)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 43; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 34).

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught why charity is such a blessing in our lives:

“The greater definition of ‘the pure love of Christ,’ however, is not what we as Christians try but largely fail to demonstrate toward others but rather what Christ totally succeeded in demonstrating toward us. *True* charity has been known only once. It is shown perfectly and purely in Christ’s unending, ultimate, and atoning love for us. It is Christ’s love for us that ‘suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not.’ It is his love for us that is not ‘puffed up . . . , not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.’ It is Christ’s love for us that ‘beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.’ It is as demonstrated in Christ that ‘charity never faileth.’ It is that charity—his pure love for us—without which we would be nothing, hopeless, of all men and women most miserable. Truly, those found possessed of the blessings of his love at the last day—the Atonement, the Resurrection, eternal life, eternal promise—surely it shall be well with them.

“This does not in any way minimize the commandment that we are to try to acquire this kind of love for one another. . . . We should try to be more constant and unending, more longsuffering and kind, less envious and puffed up in our relationships with others. As

Christ lived so should we live, and as Christ loved so should we love. But the ‘*pure* love of Christ’ Mormon spoke of is precisely that—Christ’s love. With that divine gift, that redeeming bestowal, we have everything; without it we have nothing and ultimately are nothing, except in the end ‘devils [and] angels to a devil.’ [2 Nephi 9:9.]

“Life has its share of fears and failures. Sometimes things fall short. Sometimes people fail us, or economies or businesses or governments fail us. But one thing in time or eternity does *not* fail us—the pure love of Christ. . . .

“Thus, the miracle of Christ’s charity both saves and changes us. His atoning love saves us from death and hell as well as from carnal, sensual, and devilish behavior. That redeeming love also transforms the soul, lifting it above fallen standards to something far more noble, far more holy. Wherefore, we must ‘cleave unto charity’—Christ’s pure love of us and our determined effort toward pure love of him and all others—for without it we are nothing, and our plan for eternal happiness is utterly wasted. Without the redeeming love of Christ in our lives, all other qualities—even virtuous qualities and exemplary good works—fall short of salvation and joy” (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 336–37).

Moroni 7:48. Pray “with All the Energy of Heart”

- Moroni 7:48 teaches how charity will come to a person who is continually praying “with all the energy of heart,” meaning they want it more than anything else. This fervency of prayer will bring results when praying for other issues as well. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught that the fervency of our


prayers will affect our families: “In our family circles, our children will learn how to talk to their Heavenly Father by listening to their parents. They will soon see how heartfelt and honest our prayers are. If our prayers are hurried, even tending to be thoughtless ritual, they will see this also. Better that we do in our families and in private as Mormon pleaded, ‘Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart.’ (Moro. 7:48.)” (“Pray Always,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 4).



Points to Ponder

- What are the criteria noted in Moroni 7 that help us determine what is good and what is evil?
- Why is charity the “greatest of all” gifts? (Moroni 7:46).
- What difference do your attitudes and intentions make when you give service to others?

Suggested Assignments

- Based on the attributes listed in Moroni 7:45  and Mormon’s plea in Moroni 7:48, write a short paragraph on what you can do to increase charity in your life.