

A Mighty Change of Heart (<http://mightychangeofheart.com>)

"And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" Alma 5:14

Chapter 9 – Mighty Prayer

CHAPTER 9

MIGHTY PRAYER

“Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together OFT, and join in FASTING AND MIGHTY PRAYER in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those WHO KNEW NOT GOD.” (Alma 6:6)

Approximately fifteen years after the magnificent address of King Benjamin a very perplexing problem arose in the church. A spirit of apostasy began to enter into the youth of the church. Mosiah was the king. Alma was the prophet. Listen to its description:

Now it came to pass that there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the words of king Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did not believe the tradition of their fathers. They did not believe what had been said concerning the resurrection of the dead, neither did they believe concerning the coming of Christ. And now because of their UNBELIEF they could not understand the word of God; and their hearts were hardened. And they would not be baptized; neither would they join the church. And they were a separate people as to their faith, and remained so ever after, even in their carnal and sinful state; for they would not call upon the Lord their God. (Mosiah 26:1-4)

The interesting thing is that part of that rising, rebellious generation were sons of very important people. One of them was Alma, the son of the Prophet, Alma. Four of them were Ammon, Aaron, Omner and Himni. They just happened to be the sons of King Mosiah. You can imagine the embarrassment the prophet and king felt because of the conduct of their sons. People were complaining to Alma and King Mosiah about the situation. Obviously something had to be done. A proclamation was issued making it illegal to persecute the saints of God. Now these young men weren't too interested in honoring, obeying and sustaining the laws of the land. They just went underground and continued persecuting the church in secret. Passing a law didn't do one bit of good. It didn't change the hearts of these young men at all. It didn't take the prophet and the king long to discover that this approach was of little value. It just didn't work. There must be another approach to this problem. Let's pick up the story now and see if we can discover what the other approach was. If there is a workable plan that can be used successfully it should be shouted from the house tops because there are many thousands in the Kingdom today that are faced with identically the same problem that Alma and King Mosiah had in their day.

And as I said unto you, as they were going about rebelling against God, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto them; and he descended as it were in a cloud; and he spake as it were with a voice of thunder, which caused the earth to shake upon which they stood; And so great was their astonishment, that they fell to the earth, and understood not the words which he spake unto them. Nevertheless he cried again, saying: Alma, arise and stand forth, for why persecutest thou the church of God? For the Lord hath said: "This is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it, SAVE IT IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF MY PEOPLE. And again, the angel said: Behold, the Lord hath heard the PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE, and also the PRAYERS OF HIS SERVANT, ALMA, who is thy father; for he has PRAYED WITH MUCH FAITH CONCERNING THEE that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth; therefore, for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the PRAYERS OF HIS SERVANTS MIGHT BE ANSWERED ACCORDING TO THEIR FAITH. (Mosiah 27:11-14)

All of this was too much for Alma. He was struck dumb so that he could not speak or move. In this helpless condition he was carried and laid helpless before his father. After

hearing of the experience with the angel, Alma, the father, began to rejoice. His faith had been vindicated. His prayers were answered. How long had he prayed for this wayward son? How many special fasts had he participated in that his son might be brought to repentance? The scripture is silent on this subject but it appears that it went on for several years — yes, several years. That should give us confidence. Surely anyone can pay the price in that length of time if we are burdened with a similar problem. Now let's continue with the story. Alma was lying there in a helpless state. Alma, the elder, invited the priests and a multitude that they might witness the coming event. He invited them all to participate in a special two day fast.

And it came to pass after they had fasted and prayed for the space of two days and two nights, the limbs of Alma received their strength, and he stood up and began to speak unto them, bidding them to be of good comfort: For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit. And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters. (Mosiah 27.23-25)

Do you see the significance of what has just taken place? A father, the priests and the people have demonstrated their concern so much for these five young men that they pray with such great faith, probably for years, that the Lord finally answered their prayers by sending an angel to the young men. The angel spoke plainly so that they could not mistake the message. They were brought to the crossroads, by the faith and prayers of those who loved them. They had to make a decision. The responsibility of free agency weighed heavily upon them. The choice was now theirs. But what had brought them to this point? It was the faith, fasting and prayers that had been exercised by Alma the prophet, by King Mosiah, by the priests, and by the rest of the people that had participated in the two day fast. The five boys made the right decision after they were brought to the crossroads. They repaired the damage, as well as they could, and became five of the greatest missionaries in Book of Mormon history.

When we finally discover this principle and the faith that propels it, a spiritual regeneration will begin to sweep the church as a flood. Thousands will be reclaimed through this process. Miracles that took place in the days of Alma will once again be common place in the church — if we are willing to pay the price. Fasting, faith and prayer is the key, along with the instructions that the Lord will give in each individual case. Is this not the way in which we will become "clean" from the blood and sins of this generation? There is no question but what some can be brought to the crossroads, use their free agency, and go the wrong direction. But others will choose to return to the fold of Christ like the sons of Mosiah and Alma the younger. Even if some go the

wrong direction does this lessen our responsibility to “pray and fast” them to the crossroads? If the one who returns to the fold happens to be your son or daughter it will be well worth the price — won’t it? Before concluding I want to focus for a moment on the following verses from Moroni 2 which indicate yet another vital application of “mighty prayer *Moroni 2:1-3*

*The words of Christ, which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, as he laid his hands upon them – 2 And he called them by name saying: Ye shall call on the Father in my name, IN MIGHTY PRAYER: and after ye have done this you shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands, **ye shall give the Holy Ghost;** and in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles. 3 Now Christ spake these words unto them at the time of his first appearing; and the multitude heard it not, but the disciples heard it; and on as many as they laid their hands fell the Holy Ghost.*

The account of the occasion on which this instruction was given is found at 3 Nep 18:37. See also 19:19-23. Perhaps those who confirm individuals members of the Church would do well to consider more seriously the above instruction of the Savior to the twelve during his visit to them after his resurrection concerning giving the Holy Ghost. Another interesting verse on the subject of giving the Holy Ghost is found in Section 55 to William W. Phelps. D&C 55:3

And on whomsoever **you** shall lay your hands, if **they** are contrite before me, **you shall have power to give the Holy Ghost.**

ATONEMENT OF CHRIST

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS. Matt 26:27-28

< Chapter 8 (<http://mightychangeofheart.com/etmc/chapter-8/>) Chapter 10 >
(<http://mightychangeofheart.com/etmc/chapter-10/>)