

Follow Him Episode 13 Part II

Doctrine & Covenants 29

- John Bytheway: 00:02 Welcome to Part II of this week's podcast.
- Hank Smith: 00:06 It seems to me that bringing all of these members of the Church in, they're going to have different views on the Fall. If some are coming from Presbyterian type, they're going to have views of the Fall. Others are going to come from Methodist, they're going to have views of the Fall. I know that we, as Latter-day Saints, have a completely different view of the Fall than most of the world. Here it comes up. Do you think maybe that starts to happen in this church, as different denominations, different types of religions are coming in? Because everyone's a convert, at this point. That they're going to have to find, "Okay, what do we believe?"
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 00:45 I think the context that John Whitmer gives for the Section about differing over Adam's transgressions shows that they have different views of it, as a whole. I think that supports that. Surely, that has to be going on.
- Hank Smith: 00:58 So it's this melting pot, and we'd better decide. That would just be so fascinating to find out what you believe, at every conference.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 01:07 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 01:08 Every conference it's like, "Oh, I didn't know I believed that. I do now." Whereas our [General] Conferences are very repetitive, their Conferences, this is breakthrough stuff every time we get together.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 01:19 Revelatory, oh my gosh. We've got to talk Satan, because these are the first verses, by the way, verse 36 is the first time we get, in the Doctrine and Covenants, verses about the Premortal Life.
- Hank Smith: 01:32 OK
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 01:32 This is the first time we get talking about Satan becoming Satan. Now again, that's connected to Moses Chapter 4, as we already talked about. But this is the first time... back to concepts being revealed... This is a new idea of there was this Premortal Life,

and this Premortal War, and rebellion, and Satan trying to take God's power.

- Hank Smith: 01:53 I mean, how exciting. How exciting. This is stuff that's old hat for us-
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 01:59 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 02:00 This is the moment it came out.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 02:02 For them this is brand new. Verse 36 is like brand new for most of them. They've never heard that idea before.
- Hank Smith: 02:08 Of a Premortal life. In fact, if they have the Bible, the only mentions of a Premortal life are maybe the opening verses of the Gospel of John, maybe a little bit in Jeremiah. But it's just not there.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 02:19 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 02:19 I would say, even in the Book of Mormon there is the phrase, "Foundation of the world," there is, in the first place, in Alma 13, but it's not really explained like it is here and in the Pearl of Great Price.
- Hank Smith: 02:34 Yeah. And this has got to be part of that, what you said, the intertwining with the Book of Moses. Right?
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 02:38 Yeah, it definitely is. And I think it's really important too... I'm just looking at verse 36, "For behold, the Devil was before Adam and he rebelled against me." So now they just switched. They're like, "OK, so the Devil was tempting Adam but the Devil rebelled against me saying give me thine honor, which is my power. And also a third part of the Host of Heaven turned he away from me because of their agency and they were thrust down." That down is down to Earth. This is not the end of days, this is premortal life. "And thus became the Devil and his angels." So this is almost the first time that the Lord is revealing how Satan became Satan, how the Devil fell, and I think it's really important... And then in verse 39 it would give some rationale of the Devil tempting so that we can show that we choose the sweet over the bitter.
- Hank Smith: 03:35 I was going to say this almost seems like a double whammy. Not only was there Premortal Life but there was agency in that Premortal Life.

- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 03:41 And there was agency in that Premortal Life. One of the concepts I want to touch on, let's please put to bed this idea that there were two plans in the Premortal Life. And Jesus offered a plan and Satan offered a plan and in Satan's plan, he would save everyone and in Jesus's plan there would be choice so God chose Jesus's plan and Satan got mad and God got mad at them and kicked them out. That's the worst, in my opinion, rendition of the Premortal War in Heaven that has ever happened.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 04:10 I mean Satan's rebellion against God, if I could frame it in my own words, drawing on words like this and words of Scripture, he is saying to God "Give me your power." He is saying, "I want your position. I want to be you." I mean Satan always wants to be God, that's the definition of Satan. He wants to be God without going through the plan of Godhood. He wants to rip God down out of his throne and enthrone himself. This is Isaiah 14:12-14. "How art thou fallen from Heaven, oh Lucifer, Son of the Morning? For though has said in thine heart 'I will ascend into Heaven. I will exult my throne above the star of God. I will ascend about the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most high.'" When Satan was rejecting God's plan he's not rejecting Jesus's plan, he's rejecting the Plan of Salvation, the plan of exultation, the eternal plan. And when he's saying that he wanted to destroy our agency, when people say that Satan wanted to make it so he was going to save everyone, that's an impossibility. He's running on an empty platform. That's like the kid in high school whose campaign platform to become Student Body President is "I'll make all your wildest dreams come true. I'll put a vending machine in every classroom." He's just trying to say whatever he can say to deceive.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 05:48 And with that too, we have to look at the word "agency." There is not a single human being that wants to feel forced. Human beings don't like that. People don't like to feel boxed in to a corner. And so this idea that Satan was going to take away our ability to choose, number one, it's not true. You can't take away someone's ability to choose. Agency is an eternal principle that's self-existing with your intelligence, as Joseph teaches. But number two, it also doesn't make sense that the way he would appeal to people is by saying, "I'm going to take away your ability to choose." That doesn't make sense, that's not a selling platform. Like, "Hey, I'll tell you what, let me take away your ability to choose, sound like a plan?" And people are like, "That's great!" It makes more sense that he's saying... Agency also means to represent. Like "Hank and John..."-
- Hank Smith: 06:43 Like an agent.

- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 06:44 "You have a gent to represent you."
- Hank Smith: 06:47 Oh sure.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 06:48 I know you do. You have whole teams. And it's almost like Satan is saying, "I want to take away people's..." If you're an agent, what connects to agency? Well what connects to it is accountability. Agency and accountability. The ability to represent God, therefore if you are representing God and doing God's work you're accountable, back to judgment and who you're accountable to. I almost read it more like Satan's saying, "I'm not going to make anybody accountable. I'm not going to make anybody have to answer for what they do. And that is more appealing to people. If I took general human nature, general human nature is we don't want to account for our actions. That appeals to people more.
- Hank Smith: 07:38 There are not consequences.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 07:40 Yeah, exactly.
- Hank Smith: 07:41 I've always felt that in the Book of Moses, when the Lord speaks in Moses 4:3, he sees right through Satan's false platform, as you called it. Look at verse 3, he says, "Wherefore, because Satan rebelled against me and sought to destroy the agency of man." He sees right through it. "I know what you're trying to do. You're saying you want to redeem all mankind. I know that you truly want to destroy agency." And agency is a gift. It's a gift. Agency and accountability make it so you can become like God. So I think you're right Tony, I think he's saying, "Let's get rid of this whole idea that you're accountable." One, no one's ever going to become like God. But two, "Hey you don't have to!"
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 08:21 And he's trying to stage a rebellion, a coup, in the process. He's trying to dethrone God and enthroned himself, which helps us understand why we were having none of that.
- Hank Smith: 08:32 Yeah. I would say never teach your children that Satan wanted to save everyone.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 08:36 No.
- Hank Smith: 08:36 I think the Lord saw right through that and said, "No, Satan wanted to destroy everyone." "I want to destroy you, I want to destroy God, I want in all undone."

- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 08:46 And like any dictator, he wanted to use everyone. He wants to put out a false premise and false platform, to use people to get his own ends in an unjust, unethical way. I just wanted to touch on that for a second in these verses to make sure we're not perpetuating ideas to our children that somehow Satan had a good plan. Satan's plan was terrible.
- Hank Smith: 09:08 You do you is a terrible idea. John?
- John Bytheway: 09:13 I just remember a Joseph Fielding McConkie saying it kind of funny is that "The Father's plan was not 'What should I do?' The Father's plan was 'Whom shall I send?'" He had the plan, he wasn't, "I'm stumped, what do we do here? Let's have people offer different plans." There was the Heavenly Father's plan, Satan tried to take his power, as you said, and so I appreciated that way of putting it. Our Father's question was "Whom shall I send?"
- Hank Smith: 09:47 And the same thing in Moses 4, he says, "My Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning..." Right? "I knew who I was going to send the whole time."
- John Bytheway: 09:57 "I knew what I was going to do the whole time", Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 09:58 "But I wanted him to have the choice." Right? He says "I know who I want to go, now whom shall I send?" He gets to volunteer himself. That's the Lord's value, I think, of agency, is, "I will not force anyone, including the Savior. I will not force the Savior. He can volunteer himself."
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 10:20 And it's back to that broader theme of agency that runs through this whole chapter. You choose to be elect or you choose to rebel. It's your choice.
- John Bytheway: 10:29 I tell my Book of Mormon students, because Nephi starts out by saying, "I was highly favored of the Lord." And I'm like "What? God has favorites? How can that be? That doesn't seem fair." I say, "Well, you choose that status. That's up to you. There are Lamanites, Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, and Favorites. And you choose to be a Favorite." He loveth those who will have him to be their God, 1 Nephi 17:35. I just like that idea and throughout this section, about you choose your agency.
- Hank Smith: 11:02 One thing I've learned as a parent, and I think we're getting a sense of it here, is righteousness is not righteousness unless it's chosen. The moment righteousness becomes forced it's no longer righteousness by definition. I didn't choose it.

- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 11:18 And righteousness, I don't want to get too theological but if you follow the next verses, back to Adam's sin, look at verse 39... This is what you're saying Hank, "And it must needs be that the Devil should tempt the children of men or they could not be agents unto themselves." Forced righteousness, or if it's not a choice, it's not righteousness. But then look at verse 40, "Wherefore it came to pass that the Devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment." And then here's the problem, "Wherefore he became subject to the will of the Devil, because he wielded unto temptation." Now, I know in typical Latter-day Saint discourse we only want to frame Adam and Eve's choice in glorious terms. Even as the Joseph Smith Translation translates these chapters and this enlightened view that their Fall was a Fall forward, as we like to say, let's not forget that from these verses right here, although their Fall was a Fall forward, and although they were moving the plan of God forward and they made a conscious choice to do so, the problem is they're listening to the wrong person. So, Hank, what was your line that you just said about righteousness is not righteousness if what?
- Hank Smith: 12:34 Unless it's chosen. Right? Unless it's freely chosen. If someone forces me to be righteous it's no longer righteousness, even though I'm doing the right things. I remember a youth telling me once, she was just so frustrated, she said, "I want to pay my tithing," and she said, "But my father stands over me and forces me to write out my tithing check. He watches me." And she said, "It doesn't feel right to me." And I try not to ever get between parents and children but I've always remembered that. Going, "Man! That to me does not sound like she chose righteousness. She wants to choose righteousness, but someone's forcing her to do it and it doesn't feel like righteousness to her."
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 13:16 And with that too, you can do right but following the wrong people. Adam, here, is letting Satan give him directions. That's the root problem. You and I don't yield to the voice of Satan. We don't listen to his directives. God wants Adam to follow what God's telling him to do.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 13:40 It's almost like the same problem that Cain and Abel will have. It used to always confuse me when Cain and Abel bring forth their offerings to God. When I was a kid I was always like, "But they're both bringing offerings. I thought the Lord doesn't care if our offerings are great or small. Why does the Lord have respect for Abel's offerings but not Cain's?" And it's because Cain is taking directions from the Adversary and he's not doing it for the right reasons. Now, I'm not placing a judgment here on

the great head of all of humanity, but the Lord, Himself says that the issue was that Adam yielded to temptation because he became subject to the will of the Devil in verse 40. And that, back to choosing again, we all just need to make sure that we're choosing to hearken to the right voice because the Adversary will take different measures to try to get his will done.

- Hank Smith: 14:38 These last couple of verses, 36 towards... Here we are at 41. This feels very influenced by The Book of Mormon, in 2 Nephi 2. I don't know if it is because I don't know how well they know The Book of Mormon by September of 1830 but this idea of agency, there's no better place for it to be laid out than 2 Nephi 2, right? How the Fall connects to agency and Adam's choice and results in our choice. I wonder if verse 40 isn't so much about Adam as it could be about me. Right? That I become subject to the will of the devil when I yield to temptation.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 15:20 When I yield to temptation. Yeah, well said.
- Hank Smith: 15:25 And I don't want to do that. I don't want to be subject to what he wants me to do. In the Book of Mormon we get an interesting sense of who the Adversary is and how truly scary he is, this idea of he can... What is it? You guys will have to remind me. He whispers, he leads us carefully. Where is that?
- John Bytheway: 15:50 2 Nephi 28. [crosstalk 00:15:53]
- Hank Smith: 15:52 Yeah. "Others he will pacify. Lull away into carnal security. He'll lead them away carefully down to Hell." To me, that's scary language. That you could become subject to that when you yield to temptation. I've always said sin makes you stupid. Right? You end up doing irrational things. The people on the news all the time, I'm going, "When in the world did they think that was going to work out? At what point did they think, 'This is a bad plan? This is going to end up bad for me'" And I wonder if it's part of this being pacified.
- John Bytheway: 16:30 Sheri Dew has a chapter in one of her books, I think it's called "Sin Makes You Stupid and It Costs A Lot, Too." So I've heard that before and you do you watch and you think, "How? What? Huh?"
- Hank Smith: 16:44 Yeah, I read an article the other day of a guy who stole a manual car and he didn't know how to drive it. He's stalling out in the middle of the intersection. And I'm going, "That plan never should have got off the ground."

- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 17:00 Yeah, and with what you were just saying, Hank, in verse 45... Even before 45, kind of back to the application to you and I, tying these together... When we listen to the Devil and we yield to temptation, in verse 40 and verse 41, we lose the presence of God, we become spiritually dead, which is the first death in verse 41. Which, if we stay that way, back to this whole theme of this chapter of choosing God or not, using our agency to prepare to be in His presence. Well, the only time when the Lord will say "Depart ye, cursed." At the end of verse 41, is if we don't repent, which is in verse 42.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 17:45 So the Lord says, "Hey, there's a temporal death and there's a spiritual death." Back to temporal and spiritual, "And the Lord sends angels to declare repentance and redemption from our mistakes that we make, through faith on his Son." And then, in Verse 43, the Lord gives us a probationary time to choose Him, to show that we'll choose Him and not listen to the voice of the adversary. "We'll conquer the maggots, the flesh, the flies" in verse 43. Because of Jesus we'll be raised into immortality and eternal life if we'll believe. If we don't repent, in verse 44, we'll be damned and we won't be redeemed from this Fall that started with Adam and on down to us simply because, in Verse 44, we repent not. And then in Verse 45, why? Because sometimes we love darkness rather than light and we're going to get those wages. It won't pay off well for us if who we obey...
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 18:47 You and I judge no man, we leave that to the Savior. We only judge ourselves. But, the question for all of ourselves, for us, is "Who am I choosing to obey? Who am I choosing to follow? How am I using my agency to listen to God, to follow His Son, to reject the whispers of the adversary, and to choose faith in Him and to follow Him as a whole." Section 29, it almost wraps that whole theme back when it comes back, here at the end, with those verses.
- Hank Smith: 19:24 Yeah, that's what it feels like to me. As I was reading Section 29 I feel like I kind of get lost in the woods at times and I'm chewing on a big piece of steak here, just trying to understand it and get it. But then you hit that verse, in verse 42, that seems to be the ray of light that comes. That, "I will send forth angels." He has, in the last... You know, it's 1830, that's what he's been doing since 1820, sending forth angels "to declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son." If I'm a parent, which I am, that's going to be my focus, is going to be Section 29, verse 42. All of this beforehand is a lot of the natural results of sin, the Fall, understanding Satan's plan, understanding spiritual and temporal... And it's all important, but I want to get to verse 42.

- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 20:18 Listen to this quote from Joseph Smith, he gave this is September 1839. He's giving a little discourse and he records this in his journal. It says it's, "Spoke and explained concerning the uselessness of preaching to the world about great judgment but rather to preach the simple Gospel." And then he goes on to talk about all the calamities of the Second Coming. But it's almost like he prefaces it, he's talking to some people and he's like, "Don't go out there and just preach about all these great calamities" As we've just done in Section 29, "But teach the simple Gospel." You've got to get to those verses that you just mentioned there in this Section, you've got to get to those verses 41 to 43 and 44, 45.
- Hank Smith: 21:08 It's very discouraging to teach about the Fall and then have the bell ring. Right? You're going "No, no, no, no, no." Like, "Oh man, I paced that lesson terribly" because now everyone's feeling discouraged and terrible and you're like, "Well don't ever teach the Fall without teaching the Atonement." Right? Don't ever teach the bad news without teaching the good news.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 21:30 My dad told me one time that... I wonder if I heard this right but they sang first, second verse of I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day and had to dismiss and... "Hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on Earth. Good will toward men. Goodnight, everybody." And they all go home. It's like a country music song. You've got to get to the end to get your horse back and your truck back and your dog back and everything else. Hank, what you were saying before I really liked, about the natural consequences. And I look at verse 45, "They love darkness rather than light, their deeds are evil, they receive the wages of him whom they list to obey." And that's kind of getting into that Apostle Paul thing about we receive wages and there's natural consequences of trying to follow the Savior and trying to go the other way.
- Hank Smith: 22:25 Yeah, and we hate to see it. It's not something I enjoy seeing in people's lives like, "Well, see? I told you so." But I have never seen a life controlled by the natural man, Mosiah 3, turn out well. I have never seen it turn out well.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 22:40 That's a good way to put it.
- Hank Smith: 22:40 It always spirals into a complete mess. And for those people I love I want to be there, like other people have been there for me, to help me pick up that mess. The Adversary will leave you in a mess. He will leave you kicked off to the side of the road and we'll be there to help you.

- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 23:06 If I can just read the rest of this Joseph Smith quote, where he says, "Don't talk about great judgements, but preach the Gospel." He then says this. "Also, it's a false idea that the Saints will escape all the judgments while the wicked suffer, for all flesh is subject to suffer and the righteous shall hardly escape. Still, many of the Saints will escape for the just will live by faith, yet, many of the righteous shall fall prey to disease and pestilence by reason of the weakness of the flesh and yet be saved in the Kingdom of God. So, it is an unhallowed principle to say that such and such has transgressed because they've been preyed upon by disease, or death. For all flesh is subject to death, and the Savior has said 'Judge not lest ye be judged.'" That's the rest of that quote.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 23:52 And I know that's not what you're saying, Hank, at all. You're saying that their lives don't turn out well spiritually, and they don't. Because all of us are going to suffer, as we've seen. It's part of being in this fallen world. And what these verses, and what I think what the Gospel's trying to say, is in the midst of the celestial problems of the world that all of us encounter, you can still lift up your head and rejoice and be glad, like verse 5 says. And even if temporal things go wrong, there are no temporal, it's all spiritual. You can have spiritual things go right. And that's important too, in the midst of all of this, for those who are like, "But I am loving Jesus, I am trying to follow his voice, I am trying to do what's right and temporal things are still going wrong and falling apart." Joseph's saying, "They will. It's part of living the Last Days and living in a fallen world as a whole. But you can still lift up your head and rejoice because of the Savior's promises to conquer all of that."
- Hank Smith: 24:53 Yeah. I remember Elder Maxwell saying, "There's really three reasons for trials and difficulties." He said one is our own choices, which I think that's Section 29, verse 45, Right? "We receive the wages of whom we list to obey."
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 25:08 "Whom we list to obey."
- Hank Smith: 25:10 Sometimes I think the Lord says, "You know, I was going to give you some trials, Hank, but you do a really good job of creating your own so go ahead. You're just a Master Artist of making your life hard." He said second is we sign up for a celestial world. It's just part of living on this planet. And I think that's part of the quote that you read, right Tony?
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 25:28 Yeah.

- Hank Smith: 25:28 This idea of "We all signed up to live here." The flesh, in that Joseph Smith quote. And then he said third, sometimes the Lord uses trials and difficulties to deliberately shape us. I think, when we're talking about level one, let's try to get rid of those. Let's try not to make our own trials in our lives. Let's try to not make our own lives hard.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 25:44 Life is hard enough.
- Hank Smith: 25:46 Yeah. Two is, that's going to be part of it. This is part of where we live. And three is the Lord is spiritually shaping us. Verse 42, to me, is a highlight. "I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of my Only Begotten Son." And then over to verse 49, I just drew a little line over to connect them, "Have I not commanded to repent?" That seems to be the Lord's "Wherefore, what" of this section. You've learned all this, therefore, how about some repentance? And he seems excited about repentance in verse 42. How have you, in your own teaching... And you can take this however you want it, wherever you want to go here Tony but how can we make repentance more positive? Right? A positive thing. It's a positive principle of the Gospel. The Lord talks about it with excitement and yet sometimes we talk about repentance with... kind of this pit in our stomach.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 26:51 We have to rebrand repentance. There's this idea of cognitive reappraisal.
- Hank Smith: 27:02 Those are pH.d words. You're not allowed to use those.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 27:08 Basically what it says is reframe in your mind. How you think of something in your mind affects your behavior. So, the easy one is, instead of saying "I'm nervous." You say, "I don't feel nervous." You say, "I feel excited." Because those emotions are very similar. And instead of calling it repentance we should just call it improvement, or I like to call repentance realignment. It's the easiest way for me to think of it. One quick analogy with it. I think sometimes we get down on ourselves with repentance because it's viewed as though we failed instead of viewing it as a success. And remember, faith, repentance, baptism, Holy Ghost. Positive, positive, positive, positive. It's not faith, yay! repentance, boo! baptism, yay! Holy Ghost, yay! No, those area all four very positive things.
- Hank Smith: 28:00 Poor repentance. I just feel bad for him, sitting there...

- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 28:02 I know, I know. I give this analogy where one time I took my daughter out, when she was learning to drive, I won't name her by name but her name rhymes with Megan. Hank, you know her.
- Hank Smith: 28:13 And she's on a mission right now.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 28:15 And she's currently on a mission. When we got in car, she looked at the gear shifter and she said "Dad what does PRNDL mean? P R N D L. What does PRNDL mean?" Then she asked me which one was the gas. She sincerely asked which ones the gas and which one's the brake and I said "I'll answer your question but I need to pray first."
- Hank Smith: 28:38 Let's go get your mom.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 28:40 And she was all over the place. Her first left-hand turn she turned into oncoming traffic because she thought when you turn left that you went into the nearest lane.
- John Bytheway: 28:52 Closest lane? Oh man.
- Hank Smith: 28:53 Wow
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 28:55 She went too fast on turns and too slow on straight aways, she didn't yield at a roundabout, and on and on and on. And the great thing was though, as I coached her and I said "Slow down, speed up, press on the brake, that's the other pedal..." She listened. And she realigned every time. And she was the most... I like to call it she was a terribly obedient driver. And you and I can be obedient sinners. That's an important concept to grasp, particularly for the listeners out there who struggle with feelings of perfectionism. That obedience is not mistake free living. Obedience is characterized by a heart that desires to listen to and align their life with Jesus. And if you desire to listen to and align your life with Jesus, you're obedient. Despite being all over the place sometimes with your spiritual driver. Because I know I am. I know the Lord has patience with me in it. And He has patience with you too. He loves a repentant heart. He loves someone who wants to realign and progress and listen, which is what repentance is.
- Hank Smith: 30:11 It reminds me of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Lord said, "I saw the pharisee there and he was reciting all of the amazing things he did." And they are amazing things. He was fasting twice a week, he paid a full tithing-

- John Bytheway: 30:26 Gave tithes, all of it.
- Hank Smith: 30:27 Yeah. He was doing some amazing things. But not once in his prayer was there a mention of repentance. Not once. But then you get this publican who's on the other side of the social scale, works for Rome and everybody hates him, and a publican is known for being a cheat and kind of a scoundrel. And the only thing he says in his prayer is "Be merciful to me, a sinner." And the Lord says "That's what we're after." I think almost all of the parables are just different ways of looking at repentance.
- John Bytheway: 31:05 Just the other day, teaching doctrines and teachings of the Book of Mormon... "Our topic today is repentance and Atonement and rebirth. And in the chat window put the first word that comes to your mind when I say repent." And I wanted to see were they positive, were they negative, what did I see there? And then we read Elder Holland... I think this might help us rebrand repentance, I like the way you put that, Tony... who said, "Repent is perhaps the most hopeful and encouraging word in the Christian vocabulary." And then we had a discussion about that. Why is it hopeful? Why is it encouraging? And then the Bible Dictionary definition of repentance is really nice, "A fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world."
- John Bytheway: 31:51 When you were talking, Tony, about driving, I was reminded of President Uchtdorf talking about the fact that a plane is off course most of the time and it just makes tiny corrections all the way to its destination with autopilot. We can be that too, continuously making course corrections, and we'll arrive where we need to. So, that's a good topic to talk about, rebranding repentance. And we don't want to make it sound casual or easy or be flippant about it but it is a hopeful, wonderful, thankfully available process.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 32:40 Could you imagine, back to this section, how hopeful and thankful Adam felt? After he yielded to transgression and listened to the voice of the Adversary then the Lord says, "I'll forgive you of that. I'll cleanse you of that. I'll put that right behind you and right behind me if you'll decide to listen to me. Will you listen to me?" And Adam's like, "Of course, yeah. That's what I want." And they're like, "Let's move forward." That's a hopeful thing. I bet Adam was ecstatic over that.
- Hank Smith: 33:07 Yeah, that's exciting. The idea of, "I can improve. I can change." I have a quote here from Elder Anderson. This is way back in the 1900s, but he said, "Repentance is powerful spiritual medicine. Each sin we leave behind through our faith in Christ, both those of commission and omission, open spiritual doors." See how

positive this is? "We must become converted to daily repentance. As we garner sufficient faith and trust to meekly surrender ourselves to the Lord's way, we are repenting." Anytime we say "I'll do it the Lord's way" that's a type of repentance. He then says, "We may not always succeed as quickly as we would want." I think that's part of where that difficulty comes in, is that kind of disappointment that, "I'm just not as good as I'd hoped." He says, "But, as we make repentance a constant part of our lives, miracles occur. As we continue inch by inch..." Can you feel that idea of a slow change? "As we continue inch by inch to repent, we determine nothing will hold us back. We will do our part. With this commitment to who we can become, the spiritual doors swing open. There is a new freedom to feel and to know and a freedom to become."

Hank Smith: 34:21

That sounds like what you talked about, John, "The fresh view of God and oneself." And then this promise, he says, "I promise you that as you peel off the layers of sin, just a little at a time, you will feel the loving kindness of our eternal Savior." And I would just bear witness of that, that the times where I am closest to divinity is when I am the most humble and trying to correct, trying to realign myself with God. And it's a wonderful thing. I look forward to that evening prayer, even though it stings a little bit. It's that good kind of pain, like that work out pain where you're going, "This is painful but I'm improving. I'm getting stronger. I can feel it."

John Bytheway: 35:09

Well, this has been great, Tony. Thank you for spending time with us. I hope we'll see you again. And I think our listeners would just love to hear, you've spent so many years teaching this. You know the ups and downs the early Church had, you know their triumphs, you know their mistakes. What keeps you here? What keeps you fully all in on the Gospel and in this story of the Restoration?

Dr. Anthony Swe...: 35:37

You know, I have so much to learn still but I'm glad you mentioned their ups and downs, their mistakes, their failures, their growth, their progress. Because it's emblematic of all of us individually. You know what? What I love about the Restoration and the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ and what has me continue in it, is what it does to me as a person, as a human being. Richard Bushman has a little quote where he says, "You have to ask yourself, what are the consequences of these beliefs." Meaning the beliefs of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. "Have they resulted in good in your life and the life of others you have known? If they have then you want to treat them with respect. As with science, a religion that works and

produces results has to be taken seriously." Isn't that a great quote?

- John Bytheway: 36:41 Yeah. Is that in *Rough Stone Rolling*?
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 36:44 No, it's in a little book that he wrote called *On the Road with Joseph*. It's page 111, if anyone wants the reference. But, I don't know, the reason why I referenced that quote is because the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ has profoundly changed me into being a different person. Now, I'm still extremely flawed and weak and I have a lot of areas to grow and improve but the Gospel has caused me to grow and caused me to improve.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 37:20 There was this joke when I grew up in the 90s. There was this saying that people would write in your yearbook. Don't ever change. "Stay the same!" Like, "Bro, don't ever change!" I know what they were getting at was "stay true to yourself," but the idea is that if you don't ever change there's something wrong with you. And I like to joke that if Jesus had signed my high school year book He would have said, "Tony, have a great summer but please, for all of our sakes, change." I'm serious. And then, He would have of course wrote, "P.S. I will help you because you need a lot of help."
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 38:05 I think of how the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes me be a better person, be a better husband, be a better father, be a better neighbor. It impacts every aspect of my life, every day of my life, and it impacts me for good. And that all comes through the revelations, the scriptures, beginning with Joseph Smith and on to the Latter-day prophets today. And of course I credit the Old and New Testament as well and past prophets, but again, there is something to the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ that is so expansive. I feel my soul enlarged. I feel my mind enlightened. I feel my character transformed. I feel like its teachings make me the best possible version of myself that I can be. Now, all I might ever be is a Honda Accord. I'm not a John Bytheway Ferrari or a Hank Smith Tesla but... Hey, I know. But the Lord will make me the best Honda Accord possible and that's why I love it and that's why I believe in it. It's brought out the best version of myself and that's undeniable.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 39:34 I love the gospel, intellectually. I love the Revelations. Even these that we learned. Think of everything you know about the Plan of Salvation. You know more about the Plan of Salvation than most people but it's because of revelations that have come through Joseph Smith. Things like Premortal Life and agency and the purpose of life and the Last Days and the Spirit World and Resurrection and Eternal Life and eternal families and

progressions and exultation. Those all came through the mind and the heart and the pen of that Palmyra farm boy. And that's marvelous to me. The mistakes, the hiccups, the shadows, the short comings, those are to be expected. And we need to not set up strongmen arguments that if those things exist in the Restoration that somehow the Restoration isn't real.

Dr. Anthony Swe...: 40:41

I often think that when people say that, "Well the Church can't be true because of X." The only thing that's not true is the premise that they've set up. That's what's not true. For me, personally, I like to see the Lord's hand working with regular people in regular life. I like to see their successes, their highlights. I also like to see the monotony, their mid tones, their daily life. And I like to see their shadows and their failures. Not because I glory in them but because I recognize them in myself also. And as the Lord worked with them and worked with the Church, and you see the Church continuing on this upward path, this ongoing Restoration, he works with me and he works with you. Back to Bushman's quote, "A religion that works has to be taken very seriously." And for me, this faith works. So that's just one of the many, many reasons why I believe and love the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

John Bytheway: 41:53

Beautiful. That's beautifully said.

Hank Smith: 41:56

So wonderful, just so wonderful. Dr. Sweat, we just can't thank you enough for your time. And just for our listeners sake, they should know that Dr. Sweat is also Bishop Sweat and so getting his time is very valuable because we know he picked up a little bit of work with that calling.

Dr. Anthony Swe...: 42:18

Just a bit. Just a little bit.

John Bytheway: 42:21

Some administrative too.

Dr. Anthony Swe...: 42:24

That's right.

Hank Smith: 42:25

Of which he is taking good counsel from that unnamed Apostle.

Dr. Anthony Swe...: 42:30

I mean, if you had taken my natural self, would I have ever be a Bishop? No way. And not that being a Bishop is successful, I mean do the work of a Bishop. The other night I went up and we had someone in our ward whose husband passed and I went and met and hugged and comforted this widow and then I went and met with someone else to help work with them through a problem and I don't think I would have done any of that. Regardless of the calling, by the way. The calling facilitates it,

which I appreciate. Even if I didn't have the calling I would do it but if I didn't have the Restoration I'm not sure I would. I might have stayed so insular and so self-centric. It's again back to a fault of me but the Restoration has tried to bring out a very version of me through things like callings and service and it's teachings.

- John Bytheway: 43:26 What if we're all sitting home being spiritual but not religious? "Look what the Gospel has asked me to do as a Bishop and required of me..." I just love how you said that. Probably things I might not have done but it's changed me and helped me. And if I were sitting in my recliner being spiritual but not religious... This is a religion that works.
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 43:51 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 43:53 It reminds me, John, of something you said earlier. I can't remember when but you said, "As the Holy Ghost points to us to repent..."
- John Bytheway: 44:03 Oh, it's Elder Maxwell.
- Hank Smith: 44:04 "It's also beckoning us to higher planes."
- John Bytheway: 44:08 Let me tell you exactly. It's, "When conscience calls to us from the next ridge, it is not solely to scold but also to beckon." That's Elder Maxwell. I always loved the, "Watch my hands, watch my hands, it's going to change mid quote!"
- Hank Smith: 44:25 And that feels like what Tony just said there. "The Restoration beckons me to higher places."
- John Bytheway: 44:31 President Eyring said once that, "When you feel the Spirit, don't be surprised if it's accompanied by what you feel is a rebuke." So sometimes you get that, "Ugh, I've got to do better." But you feel a little bit of both. You're like, "Yeah, I'm convicted but I'm excited, I'm going to try a little harder."
- Dr. Anthony Swe...: 44:51 And that's what I'm feeling right now. I can tell, when we've been spiritually uplifted. I just think to myself, "I'm going to do better. I'm going to do better today."
- John Bytheway: 44:59 I'm going to be a better Hyundai Sonata.
- Hank Smith: 45:05 Well, my friends, thank you so much for joining us. Thanks for your support of the podcast. We want to thank our Producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen, and we want to thank our

listeners, you wonderful people. Thank you for listening and we hope you will join us on our next episode of followHIM.