

## EPISODE 27 • PART I

Dr. Bradley R. Wilcox



*D&C 71-75*

Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:01</u>	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:09</u>	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:10</u>	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:11</u>	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:13</u>	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:15</u>	As together, we follow him.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:18</u>	Friends, welcome to another episode of Follow Him. My name is Hank Smith. I am here with my timeless co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:31</u>	You looked at my face and you just thought, "Man, he's been around a long time. This guy is timeless."
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:35</u>	No, John, you are timeless. You really are. Your generations have listened to you.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:45</u>	Now, we just want to remind everybody that we have some social media platforms. You can find us on Instagram and Facebook. We have a website, <a href="http://follomhim.co">follomhim.co</a> , <a href="http://followhim.com">followhim.com</a> , where you can find sources, the transcripts of our interviews. And we'd love for you to rate and review our podcast, if you wouldn't take just 30 seconds to do that, really helps us out.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:01:12</u>	Now, John, I know I'm excited for today, but I know you were even more excited for today because this was a discussion we've had for quite a while, a couple of months you've wanted this one to happen. So why don't I let you take it from here? Tell us who we have with us.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:01:29</u>	Oh, we're so excited to have Dr. Brad Wilcox. And I've known him as Brad for years. I got home from my mission in the '80s and started EFY and watched this speaker get up and we were laughing, we were learning, we were touched. I had never seen

anything like it. I thought, "This guy is awesome." And let me just read his bio and then we'll add our own adjectives, right?

- John Bytheway: 00:02:00 Brad Wilcox is an associate professor in the Department of Ancient Scripture at BYU. He received his bachelor's degree in elementary education from BYU and taught sixth grade in the Provo School District before returning to BYU for a master's degree in teaching and learning. Then he took off and he went to Wyoming, got a PhD in curriculum and instruction with a focus in literacy from... At the football games, they'd go W-Y-O, from the University of Wyoming in Laramie. He joined the faculty at BYU and spent many tears... Many years and many tears in the teacher education department. He could tell us if that's true or not. He moved to ancient scripture in 2016.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:41 He's the author of the book *The Continuous Atonement*, and what a blessing that's been to so many; and the BYU devotional on speeches.byu.edu called *His Grace is Sufficient*. Brad grew up in Provo, Utah, except for childhood years spent in Ethiopia. He served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Chile, and then later returned to preside over the Chile Santiago East Mission from 2003 to 2006. And I think he used to get visited by someone known as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland when he was down there. He and his family have also lived for a time in New Zealand and Spain. If I'm timeless, Brad's international, Brad's global where.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:25 Yeah he's universal.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:26 He's universal. He directed study abroad programs for BYU. Brad's served as a member of the Sunday School General Board. And he's currently in the General Young Men's Presidency. His research interests include all aspects of literacy, as well as gospel topics and onomastics. Did I say that right, Brad?
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:03:45 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:46 Onomastics, which is the study of names. And he and his wonderful wife, Debbie have four children and six grandchildren. Is that still accurate?
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:03:55 We've got number nine coming this summer.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:58 I have learned so much from Brad. Brad has more energy. If you put jumper cables on Brad's ears, you could power the entire tri-state area. I have, Hank, one of the only known photographs of Brad sleeping during the daytime. We had just finished a

Youth Conference and we got on a plane, and after writing about 300 thank you notes and cards and stuff, he fell asleep and I snapped a photo.

- John Bytheway: 00:04:27 Anyway, so energetic and almost every book I've written, which number in the twos. No, I've written a bunch. But Brad has so kindly, as busy as he is, reviewed manuscripts and helped make every one of them better. He's kind, but he'll tell me, "Hey, you ought to do this. You ought to do this." And I feel he's a lifelong friend and I'm so grateful to have him here today. Thanks, Brad, and welcome.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:04:54 Thank you. What a beautiful introduction. Just being with the two of you is not uncomfortable at all, because we have spent many, many years together. The three of us have taught together. We've traveled together. They always say that the way to get to know somebody really well is to travel together and we've done it. We know each other inside and out. And I have loved being your mission companion for years and years this week go to Youth Conferences, as we work with young single adults, it's just been a joy to be able to have the two of you in my circle of, as John says, lifelong friends.
- John Bytheway: 00:05:39 We've spent tears and years, right?
- Hank Smith: 00:05:44 Brad and I, people will ask me sometimes, they'll say, "What's it like working with John or Brad? Are they the same as they are?" I said, "They're better." You don't have this onstage presence and then this grouchy old man presence. It's, "They're even kinder in person." And then someone will say, "Oh, I listened to a Brad Wilcox talk, or I listened to John Bytheway talk. Sorry." And I'm, "No, no, don't say sorry, because I personally could never have done what I have done without Brad making the road and John paving the road." I cannot express my just admiration, awe, thanks enough. And everyone listening should know, Brad Wilcox is a hugger.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:06:48 Yeah, COVID's about killed me. Not because of the virus, but because of the six foot distance stuff.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:55 Yeah, he is a hugger. And getting a hug from Brad Wilcox it's like getting a hug from the Holy Ghost. It is-
- John Bytheway: 00:07:02 Yeah, bus drivers, Walmart clerks, anyone around Brad...
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:07:07 My sister-in-law gave me a t-shirt that said, "If it moves, hug it." So I guess that's my motto.

Dr. Bradley R. ...:	<u>00:07:16</u>	But it is funny how people think that we compete with each other because the students at BYU think that there's some sort of sick competition going on between John Bytheway and Hank Smith and Brad Wilcox. And I think, "No, they don't realize that we're dear friends." And when some kid comes up to me and says, "Gosh, you're not as good as Hank Smith." I say, "You're right." And when somebody comes up and says, "Your book changed my life." And I say, "Oh, thank you." "Will you sign it?" "Oh, yes." And then they give me one of John's books.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:07:59</u>	I've signed Hank Smith CDs before.
Dr. Bradley R. ...:	<u>00:08:01</u>	I just sign it. I used to explain that that's John's book, but now I just sign it.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:08:07</u>	"Yeah, whatever."
John Bytheway:	<u>00:08:09</u>	My kids listen to Hank's CDs in the Sequoia. And I think, boy, in this day and age, what we've been talking about, to have so many voices, I am so grateful for anybody who wants to bear testimony to my kids and who can make them laugh and who can make them feel some joy. So thanks for being on the same team, guys.
Dr. Bradley R. ...:	<u>00:08:30</u>	Yeah, and that's the point. I always tell the students at BYU, "When you're trying to build your own kingdom, then people can get competitive. But if you're trying to build the Lord's kingdom, then we're all on the same team." Hank's success is my success. John's success is my success. And because we're such dear friends, then instead of feeling competitive, instead of feeling belittled by somebody else's success, we can feel grateful because having you two on my team, it's like having two Michael Jordans on my team. I'm going to get the ball to you as often as I can, because if you get the basket, then we all succeed. Because we're trying to help people come to Christ. And when that's our motive, and I sincerely testify that that is Hank's motive and John's motive and my motive, and if that's our motive, then we're all trying to do the same thing. And the more we can do it together, the more fun it is.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:09:39</u>	Yeah, that's why today I'm really excited. John, I'm sure you thought of this verse, knowing you so well, I'm sure you were like, I think Alma said something like that in Alma 29. "I do not joy in my own success alone, but my joy is more full because of the success of my brethren."

John Bytheway: 00:09:57 And they get so joyous in The Book of Mormon, they just tip over and are unconscious for three days. I mean, we are legit friends. We love to watch each other teach and testify to our own kids. I mean, Hank teaches my own kids and I'm so glad he's there. And Brad teaches my children and I'm so glad he's there. And Brad's helped write letters of recommendation for my kids in school. And Hank's daughter and my son went to prom. We are friends. So you got to know this.

Hank Smith: 00:10:30 Oh, and John, Brad would never say this, but you mentioned that talk at BYU. I was there.

John Bytheway: 00:10:37 His Grace is Sufficient.

Hank Smith: 00:10:38 I was there for that talk. It was a summer devotional, which they have in a smaller venue there.

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:10:45 Yeah. That was in the De Jung Concert Hall, and there were only a few hundred people there. So yeah, you were one of the few.

Hank Smith: 00:10:51 Yeah. I sat there and listened.

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:10:53 That's called true devotion, you came to that.

John Bytheway: 00:10:57 Devotional.

Hank Smith: 00:10:59 And that talk, and Brad did not mean for this to happen, this was not on his mind, in fact, he was going to give a talk on humor, decided at the last minute to switch it up and do a talk on grace. Became the most downloaded talk in BYU devotional history. And it's not a thing he talks about. I've never, ever seen Brad say, "Guess who has the most downloaded talk?" He's never said that. He would never even think it. But it has changed more lives. Students have told me about it. Church members have told me about it. They've said, "Oh, it just spoke to my heart." So we'll encourage anyone, what website did you say, John?

John Bytheway: 00:11:45 [Speeches.byu.edu](http://Speeches.byu.edu). I mean, what a treasure that whole website is. But yeah, they used to have a download of things and I always used to see when I went there to find something, "Oh, look, there's there's Brad." And when I teach 2 Nephi 25, "What does that phrase mean, 'After all we can do.'?" Well, wow, watch Brad take it apart. And watch the hope and the grace of Christ come to the forefront as we talk about that.

Hank Smith: 00:12:12 It's called His Grace...

John Bytheway:	<u>00:12:14</u>	Is sufficient.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:12:15</u>	Is sufficient.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:12:17</u>	Okay. Well, at some point we need to start the Come Follow Me lesson, Brad. We are excited to study Come Follow Me with you this week. We're studying Sections 71 through 75. These are a series of shorter sections, and the issues that are being dealt with all seem to be all over the place. So why don't we just take them one at a time or however you want to do it, give us some context, give us some history our listeners need to know, and jump into these verses and tell us what you see.
Dr. Bradley R. ....:	<u>00:12:50</u>	I think listeners are going to be surprised as they realize that these short little sections actually have a great deal to say to us today, and a great deal of hope for us today. And we sometimes will read these sections and think, "Oh, that doesn't have much to do with me." But I think you'll be surprised, it really does.
Dr. Bradley R. ....:	<u>00:13:13</u>	Let's take a look at Section 71. Now Sidney and Joseph are translating the Bible. You've talked before in your other episodes about the Joseph Smith Translation, which isn't really a translation, it's an inspired commentary. And he's going through this to be able to learn the gospel as much as teach the gospel. And so they're busy in this work and God wants them in this work. But then along comes a situation that arises with Ezra Booth. Now, Ezra Booth was a Methodist minister and he read a copy of The Book of Mormon with John Johnson. And then he saw Elsa Johnson healed.
Dr. Bradley R. ....:	<u>00:14:06</u>	Have you shared that story before in your episodes?
Hank Smith:	<u>00:14:09</u>	A little bit. We would love to hear it.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:14:12</u>	You can refresh our memory, yeah.
Dr. Bradley R. ....:	<u>00:14:13</u>	John, why don't you go ahead and share that, John?
John Bytheway:	<u>00:14:16</u>	Well, they were in Kirtland. They were at that little... Didn't they call it a hotel? It's kind of kiddie corner to the Newel K. Whitney store. And Elsa is sitting there and her arm has been, just say withered, not able to function very well for years.
Dr. Bradley R. ....:	<u>00:14:32</u>	And she couldn't. And John, with your back problems that you're struggling with, you know what that means to not be able to move like you'd like. She couldn't even lift her arm above her head.

Hank Smith: 00:14:44 Yeah. She said it was the hanging the laundry out to dry, she couldn't do it. She had to do it with just her left arm, right?

John Bytheway: 00:14:53 Yeah. And Joseph Smith, what were the words he used? He said, "Do you have the faith to be healed?" Or did he say something like that? Or did he just walk over and have her reach out her arm and healed her arm. And then just walked out, if I remember, right.

Hank Smith: 00:15:11 Right. It wasn't a big to do. He kind of walked over to her in the corner. He didn't have everybody gathered around.

John Bytheway: 00:15:18 No.

Hank Smith: 00:15:19 But Ezra Booth caught sight of it.

John Bytheway: 00:15:20 Ezra Booth was there. And it, I guess, opened his heart a little bit. And at that point, he being a friend of John and Elsa Johnson, joined the church.

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:15:35 Yeah. He was called on a mission and he found that the mission was difficult and he was living without purse or scrip. Now he'd been used to being a paid minister. So it was a difficult transition for him to go from, "Hey, I am receiving a nice income for this, and now I'm doing it for nothing. And there are days that I'm not even eating." And so it became very hard for him and he ended up leaving the church and publishing nine letters in an Ohio newspaper. And he wrote about what he called the Mormon delusion.

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:16:22 Now Joseph Smith called them, his letters, a monument to the weakness and wickedness of Ezra Booth. Whoa, that's some pretty powerful language coming from Joseph Smith. I think he was especially disappointed in Ezra Booth because he had seen a miracle. He had seen a miracle and he had come into the church. And yet when things got hard, he turned bitter against the church. And I think knowing the amazing experience that he had, it especially saddened Joseph Smith. And so he caused enough problems. These letters were causing enough problems that then that brought this section forth. And it says in verse one, "The time has verily come that it is necessary and expedient in me that you should open your mouth in proclaiming my gospel."

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:17:35 Now, why was it expedient? Well, because there were enough members that were getting disillusioned by these letters. There were enough people in the community that were turning their

hearts against the Latter-day Saints because of this, that the Lord said, "It's time for you, Joseph, it's time for you, Sidney, to go." And look in verse two, it says, "The regions round about." And in the church, isn't it interesting that missionaries always think that they need to have a mission call that takes them clear across the world? And they even get disappointed if they get called to a nearby state or a nearby country, because they think, "Oh, I've got to go clear across the world to preach the gospel." But the prophet himself was called on a mission to the regions round about, and in the church.

- Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:18:31 Missionary work isn't all done with those who are not members of the church. Missionary work can be done as we help everyone live the gospel, as we help everyone care about those in need, as we help others share the gospel, and as we help unite families for eternity. All of those are aspects of missionary work and he is being called to the church.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:59 Brad, I'm going to ask you a question here, because I think this is crucial because I think when I served a mission, reactivating a member didn't feel like a baptism, right? And so it was kind of like, "Oh..." And yet, now that I'm looking back, I'm going, "This is part of missionary work, is going out there." Missionaries today are reactivating some members who were baptized a couple of years ago. That is very much missionary work, right?
- Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:19:36 I was blessed to serve in Chile. You mentioned this earlier. I was blessed to serve in Chile at the same time that Elder Holland was directing the work down there. And it was so remarkable to watch him see and help us see missionary work as something much more than just teaching non-members and baptizing them into the church. He helped people see that we needed to continue to minister to them so that they could stay strong in the church. And he helped the missionaries devote a big solid chunk of their time to reactivation. That was the same time that Preach My Gospel was coming out, and he was so instrumental in helping the missionaries make that shift, to the shift that Preach My Gospel talks about, that says, "When we're doing anything we can to help build the kingdom, that's all part of missionary work."
- Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:20:36 So we see that here in Section 71, and look at verse six, it says, "For unto him that receiveth it shall be given more abundantly, even power." Now, Hank and John, you both were kind enough to mention the talk I gave on grace, but I have often used this very verse as I talk about grace, because many people in the Christian world know that grace is a gift, but they think of grace as a one-time gift. You get it once and for all. And in reality, this

verse describes a little better how we receive grace. "For unto him that receiveth it shall be given more abundantly, even power." Grace is defined as enabling power. And so those who receive it receive more.

- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:21:38 If we think of grace as a scholarship, then a scholarship is a free gift, it's not a student loan, it's a gift. And those who receive it, if they use it and they keep their grades up, then they receive more. And they receive more. But those who don't use it, then it is taken away. I know because a lot of my students who are freshmen come to BYU with a scholarship that they've worked so hard for, and they'll lose it in the first semester. Why? Because they didn't take advantage of the opportunity. A scholarship doesn't guarantee learning and a scholarship doesn't guarantee graduation. It facilitates it. And grace facilitates this transformation in our lives. Those who receive grace, then they receive more grace. But those who don't take advantage of the grace they're given, those who reject it, then it's not that God doesn't want to give them more. It's that he can't.
- Hank Smith: 00:22:54 They're not even on campus anymore, right?
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:22:57 Right.
- Hank Smith: 00:22:58 They're not using the scholarship. They're not applying. They're not... Yeah.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:23:01 And so he would love to give them more, but he can't. Think of The Parable of the Talents. One time I was reading that in Matthew 25, and then my daughter said, "Dad, I think that's talking about grace." I said, "No. No, honey. I know these things. I teach at BYU. And it's talking about money." And she said, "No, Dad, I think it's talking about grace." And I said, "I don't think so." She said, "Dad. Read it again." And so I did. And with the lens that my daughter had given me, I did see it in a different light. Because we traditionally, okay he gave to one five talents, one two, and one one.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:23:52 But think of talents, not as an amount of money per se, but think of them as books. He gave five books to one servant, two to another, and one to another. Well, when he came back, the one who received two and the one who received five, they had read their books. And so he said, "Welcome into my library." And he was able to give them more. The one who received one book, had the book taken away. Why? Because God was being mad, God was mean, God was punishing him? No. It's because he hadn't read it. And what good is a book to somebody who

doesn't read it? Even if God said, "Well, I love that person so much. Enter into my library anyway." If that servant can't handle one book, what's he going to do with a library? He may not even want to go into the library until he's better prepared. So this verse always makes me think of grace.

- Hank Smith: 00:25:03 What's interesting is that the servant with the one book, he blames the Lord, right? "I knew you were hard. I knew you would judge me harshly." And the Lord returns it to, "You. This was you. Your decision." What does he say? "You are a slothful servant."
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:25:23 Yeah, "You didn't read the book."
- Hank Smith: 00:25:24 Yeah. So as much as we want to put the blame on God, "You don't love me. You don't care. You are judgmental." God's saying, "This was your choice. You did this."
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:25:39 And, "For unto him that receiveth it shall be given more abundantly, even power." And those who don't receive, it's taken away. Well, how do I receive grace? Some Christians say Latter-day Saints don't believe in grace because we believe in ordinances and we believe in commandments. We have more faith in that than we do in grace. What they don't understand is that for us ordinances and covenants are not what we do instead of grace. It's what we do to use grace, to receive grace, to acknowledge it, to appreciate it, and to welcome more and more grace into our lives. And as we welcome more then God is able to give more. So if we think of grace not as a one-time gift that he gives to all of his children, but rather as a library of books and he is giving us one book after another.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:26:55 My little grandkids, some of them are getting old enough now that I used to read books to them. Now they can read little books to me. What do I do when they finish a book?
- Hank Smith: 00:27:05 Give them another.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:27:06 I give them another. The minute they finish one, I give them another. And then I give them another after that. Because I know then they're in this path of learning that is part of the transformation that God and Jesus are trying to have happen in our lives. We read about that a little later in these same sections when we read about sanctification.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:27:38 But let's go to the end of Section 71, verses nine and 10. At the bottom it says, "No weapon that is formed against you shall

prosper. And if any man lift his voice against you, he shall be confounded in mine own due time." And I think that's a beautiful promise. Sometimes we get discouraged because there's so much stuff on the internet bombarding us. And so many voices saying, "You're wrong and I've got all this evidence that proves the church isn't true." And there's just so many voices coming at us. We have to remember what the Lord told Joseph Smith, no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper. And we have to keep that same perspective. Nothing they say, nothing they can do is going to stop the progression of the church, the forward movement of the church.

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:28:34 And he says, "If any man lift his voice against you, he shall be confounded." Joseph wasn't the one who was confused. It was Ezra Booth who was confused. And in the end, because Ezra Booth's choices took him away from Joseph and away from the church, it was Ezra Booth who was confounded. It was Ezra who ended up confused. Joseph and those who stayed true to him were always moving in the forward direction.

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:29:12 So I told you, section 71 has a lot to do with our day, doesn't it?

Hank Smith: 00:29:17 I've had students before say, "Aren't you worried about this written on the internet, this big thing?" And I always tell them this story. There was a man in Germany who ran into some very, very anti material. And he became interested because of it, looked into the church, ended up joining the church, moving to Utah, starting a little school in Provo. His name's Karl G. Maeser. He started a little school in Provo that became Brigham Young Academy, that became Brigham Young University. So I'm really grateful for that little anti-Mormon book that he ran into because it introduced him to the church. So I think that's one of the ways the Lord is saying, "It will be confounded in mine own due time."

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:30:03 Yeah. Elder LeGrand Curtis Jr, who is the church historian right now, he says, "I don't worry that people are going to find something out about church history." He says, "I worry that they're not going to find out enough about church history." And the same story you shared about, about Karl G. Maeser, Hank, it happened in this situation as well. There was a man named Ira V. Ames, A-M-E-S. And he was actually attracted to the church by letters that were written by Ezra Booth and published in the newspaper. It was those letters that led him to joining the church. And this man stayed strong his whole life. He participated in Zion's Camp and he was a faithful disciple throughout his entire life. So there we see evidence of the

words that the Lord said to Joseph Smith, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper."

- Dr. Bradley R. ....: [00:31:12](#) I can't tell you how many people I've met personally, not just people I've heard about, but people I've met personally, who ended up joining the church because their interest was first piqued by The Book of Mormon musical. Now I've never seen it. I've never listened to the music because I don't want to hear all the swear words. I do know what it's about because people have told me. But I just think that's a great example of what we're talking about. This weapon may have been formed against the church, and yet God can use it to pique people's interest and they come into the church. And I've actually met men and women who have come into the church because of their first exposure to The Book of Mormon through that musical.
- Hank Smith: [00:32:12](#) Yeah, so have I.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: [00:32:13](#) So there's some beautiful evidence.
- John Bytheway: [00:32:15](#) Yeah, Ezra Booth and the people who did the musical and things like that, not our enemy when things like this end up happening. If somebody has an open heart and is willing to say, "I'd like to see the other side of this. I think I'll read those Ezra Booth letters. I'll go read some other ones, too." Some good things can happen from there. And if you remember in The Book of Mormon, when Alma and Amulek are questioned by Zeezrom, I think that's how you say it, and at first, Zeezrom's questions are gotcha questions. He is not about learning truth. He's a lawyer and he's trying to confound them. A gotcha question is, "I'm going to trap you." It's what reporters do and things like that. And when Alma and Amulek started to preach, he heard something that touched his heart and all of a sudden...
- John Bytheway: [00:33:15](#) I call these gotcha questions and then they go to Google questions, which are just information, and then there's golden questions. "Where did I come from? Why am I here? What's going on?" And Zeezrom suddenly goes to golden questions. And Alma tells him this was the plan of thine adversary. And I've always just loved that one word. He didn't say the adversary. He's your enemy too. And I share this with my kids when we have a family fight or a struggle or something, to say, "This is not about you versus me. This is all of us versus the adversary. Our adversary. And let's see ourselves together as a team." And so the Lord can do things in such interesting ways to bring his purposes about.

John Bytheway: 00:34:09 And if you don't mind, I want it to talk about that word receive in verse six, "Unto him that receiveth." I've always thought that in a more modern way, we look at it as a, "Did you get the letter?" But receiving implies, "I'm letting it in. I'm allowing it to come in." We have a wedding reception, we receive guests. And the funny thing to me is when I was thinking about this, I started thinking about The Parable of the Sower, where they received seed. And then I looked at the footnote on the word receive, footnote 6A, Matthew 13:12, right after The Parable of the Sower, Jesus talks about, "He that receives will receive more." Just as Brad has spoken. And about how we confer the Holy Ghost. What are the words that are used by the priesthood holder?

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:34:59 Receive.

John Bytheway: 00:35:00 Yeah. It's noy you've got the Holy Ghost. No, it's a command that you receive, let it in, allow it in. You open yourself to let it in.

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:35:12 Think about a receiver on a football field.

John Bytheway: 00:35:15 Yeah.

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:35:15 He has to do something to receive.

John Bytheway: 00:35:19 Oh, I like that.

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:35:19 It doesn't just happen. He's running, man, he's putting himself in a position so that he can receive the gift. Beautiful insight, John.

Hank Smith: 00:35:29 I just want to make this very clear. The Ezra Booths of 2021, the Zeezroms of 2021, these are not our enemy. And too often, we think we're somehow defending the cause by going after these individuals, by threatening them. There's Latter-day Saints who feel like, "If I can go and threaten these enemies of the church, I'm helping the Lord." And I think the Lord is saying here, "No, no, no. You keep my commandments. They are true and faithful." So I don't know. You can tell, I feel pretty strongly about this, but these people on online who are all over saying the church is terrible, they are not our enemy. As John said, we could say to them, if they hear us, "Your enemy too is behind all of this." Right? "Our enemy is the adversary and your enemy is the adversary. And that's who's behind all this."

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:36:33 You know, one of the most quoted scriptures in General Conference by prophets, seers and revelators over the last 50 years, and you might say, "Brad, how do you know it's one of the

most quoted?" Because I counted them. I counted them. I actually did an article on that to find out what were the most quoted scriptures from The Book of Mormon. But one of the top ones is Mosiah 3:19, "For the natural man is an enemy to God." But I always have to remember that God is not his enemy. God is not the enemy of the natural man. God is his best friend because it's through God that that natural man, that prideful and unrepentant man can be changed through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and become a saint, childlike, submissive, loving. That change is possible. And so you're right. Hank. We have to remember who the real enemy is and that God is not the enemy.

- Hank Smith: 00:37:53 Yeah, he doesn't say to Joseph and Sidney, "You go get Ezra." Right?
- John Bytheway: 00:37:57 In fact, I was just thinking, look at what he does say in verse one, "It's expedient to me that you should open your mouths in proclaiming my gospel." Gospel is good news. This is the glad tidings of great joy. That's what the gospel is. And then look again at the end, as Brad said, "Don't worry, no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper." And in the Come Follow Me manual it references Elder Robert D. Hale's talk on Christian courage. And I think the way that we respond to that is going to, hopefully, if we respond with Christian courage, make it easier for those two to come back. You've heard the idea that we don't want to burn bridges, we want to make it, "You were so kind to me during that time when I was struggling." "Yeah, come on back." Joseph does that to W. W. Phelps, those stories are coming up, but just...
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:38:57 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:38:58 John, so what I hear you saying, and Brad, what I hear you saying, is the best way to overcome the weapons that are formed against us is teaching the gospel, sharing the gospel. Maybe not responding, not with hatred, not threatening, but show the good news, show it.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:39:19 And live it. Look at verse 11, "Wherefore, keep my commandments. They are true and faithful." So he's saying, "You don't have to go fight anybody. You don't have to ridicule anybody. You don't have to go tear anybody else down. Just live the gospel, keep my commandments, share the gospel." And instead of saying, "Oh, these other groups are... Let's start talking about what's bad about everybody else." Instead, we just say, "No, we're just going to share what's good about what we have in the restored gospel we have."

John Bytheway: 00:39:57 My mission president used to tell us, "Always better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." And I always liked that idea.

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:40:05 Beautiful.

Hank Smith: 00:40:06 Thanks, John.

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:40:07 Well, let's go ahead to Section 72. And in this section we see the calling of Newel K. Whitney as a bishop. Now he wasn't the very first bishop. The first bishop was Edward Partridge. But interesting things that we read as we go through this. First of all, Edward Partridge wrote a letter to Lydia Partridge. And in this letter he said, "I fear my station is above what I can perform to the acceptance of my Heavenly Father." Anybody who's ever been called as a bishop can relate to those words. "I fear my station, my calling, is above what I can perform to the acceptance of my Heavenly Father." Newel K. Whitney had a similar response.

John Bytheway: 00:41:02 In fact, would this be a good time? Can I read something that Newel K. Whitney's grandson, Orson F. Whitney, said in General Conference?

Hank Smith: 00:41:11 Awesome.

John Bytheway: 00:41:12 And Hank, I'm timeless. I was there. This was in 1919. And I remember where I was sitting.

Hank Smith: 00:41:19 You remember it. You remember the meeting.

John Bytheway: 00:41:21 We parked our wagon outside and mom said, "Now you're going to have to take the handcart home with your sister." But so Orson F. Whitney said, "Newel K. Whitney, staggering under the weight of the responsibility that was about to be placed upon him, said to the prophet, 'Brother Joseph, I can't see a bishop in myself.' No, but God could see it in him. He was a natural bishop, a first-class man of affairs. Probably no other incumbent of that important office, the presiding bishopric to which he eventually attained, has been better qualified for it than Newel K. Whitney. But he could not see it, and he shrank from the responsibility. The prophet answered, 'Go and ask the Lord about it.' And Newel did ask the Lord and he heard a voice from heaven say, 'Thy strength is in me.' That was enough. He accepted the office and served in it faithfully to the end of his days, a period of 18 years."

- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:42:19 Now, do you see how that ties back to what we were talking about grace? If grace is power, if it is divine strength, as he turns to the Lord, then the Lord tells him, "Thy strength is in me and you can do this. You can make it through." Now, he's given stewardship at the hand of every steward, he is to render an account of his stewardship. So he is to receive what's in the storehouse. And that means that people's time and talents and means are being turned over to the bishop in Zion and he is making sure that people are giving an account of that stewardship.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:43:08 Now, today, we often read this and we think about what was happening financially, that they were giving of their land or giving of their homes or giving of their finances. But we have to remember that the law of consecration is giving our time, our talents and our means. And even today, we give our time, we give our talents and we give our means and all of that. Some people say, "Brother Wilcox, will we one day live the law of consecration?" And I say, "It's up to you. You can live it right now." We're not promising to live a law someday down the road. We're promising to live a law right now that says we will give our time, our talents and our means to the church. And we do that.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:44:01 Now here's the interesting thing. We are living in a time where there has been an inspired change to the role of a bishop. In 2019, we heard an inspired announcement that said that there were not going to be any more Young Men presidencies at the ward level. And that the bishoprics, as they're told in scripture in Section 107, the bishoprics are going to be the leaders of the youth. Well, we've now been living with that announcement for over a year. And bishops are staggering a little bit. They're saying, "How on earth do I take the youth on top of everything else that I'm responsible for?" And they need to remember that this is not an issue of we're doing something new. This is an issue of getting back to where the scriptures talk to us in the first place.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:45:07 The Young Men, presidency was something that happened in response to Scouting. Because Scouting is a national organization and it exists and has a national organization. Well, as the church used Scouting as the activity arm of the Aaronic Priesthood, then they needed some men who could run the Scouting program. And that's where Young Men presidencies come from. But the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood have never been held by the Young Men presidency. The keys are held by the bishop. They're held by the teacher's quorum president. They're held by the deacons quorum president. And now this

alignment now that we've separated ourselves from Scouting, then the responsibility for the youth can be back where it needed to be all along. And that is the bishopric.

Dr. Bradley R. ....

00:46:10

Now I was serving as a member of the high council when the announcement was made. And they said that the stake Young Men president would now be a member of the high council. Well, shortly after that announcement, I was called to be the stake Young Men president. And my first response, I have to be honest with you, was, "Oh, seriously? Like I don't have enough on my plate? This calling isn't enough, now I have to be the Young Men president too?" And I know a lot of bishops are feeling that same way. "Seriously? Like I don't have enough on my plate?" And we have to remember, as I prayed about that, I was able to realize that this was a very inspired change that needed to happen. And one thing that helped me realize that was to find out that the Young Men president was holding his calling, throughout the entire church, the average time that a Young Man president was in was about nine months. That's not enough time to build the relationships that we need.

Dr. Bradley R. ....

00:47:16

High council members, bishopric members, they usually serve for longer than nine months. And that was the average, which means that some of those men were in even shorter times. So if we need to build the relationships that will keep youth strong, those relationships come as we have time with the youth. So I think that part of the reason that the bishops are being called into that call to action, that high council members are being called to action is because they have time to build those relationships. And we have to have a cultural shift in our minds. See what is being described here with Newel K. Whitney is the work of the presiding bishop who takes care of the temporal affairs of the church and the responsibilities of ward bishops to take care of temporal needs within their wards.

Dr. Bradley R. ....

00:48:19

But now we've got to let a cultural shift happen and understand that later in Section 107, then we start understanding that the Aaronic priesthood, the leader of the Aaronic Priesthood also was the bishop, so that he could build those relationships. And we've got to have a cultural shift. You guys aren't old enough to remember this, but I remember when I was growing up, culturally we looked at the bishop as a fundraiser. He was always asking for money for the temple fund, money for the building fund, money for the welfare, money for the budget. And so I have a memory of a bishop being culturally looked at as a fundraiser.

- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:49:09 Then when the church changed that, then we started looking at the bishop the way that many people do now, and that is as a free counselor. We go to the bishop, he's going to counsel us in our marriage. He's going to counsel us through our problems. He's going to counsel us and help us with everything that's going on in our lives. And now our church leaders, as they emphasize the need for the bishop to work with the youth, they are telling the members it's time for the bishop to delegate those responsibilities of counseling to Relief Society presidents, to elders quorum presidents, to presidencies of the elders quorum and Relief Society. And even to other members of the ward. Every ward has a former bishop in it.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:50:01 Well, if that former Bishop is consecrated, if he has given his time, his talents and means to the church, then they are part of the bishop's storehouse or what this section calls the Lord's storehouse. And so the bishop can call on those things and the bishop can delegate. Not confessions for sins, that requires a common judge in Israel, which is a bishop's role, but the ongoing counseling can be delegated to someone else, even a professional counselor. It can be delegated to that man or that woman. And we can use what's in the storehouse to be able to meet the needs, so the Bishop has time for his family and time for the youth. The rising generation.
- Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:50:59 In our day, President Nelson has clearly said that the bishopric is responsible for the youth, not just the Aaronic Priesthood, but the Young Women as well. Now he doesn't do this all alone. There are advisors who are called. There are specialists who are called. There is a Young Women's presidency called in the ward. And that can all be part of this storehouse that he has, and he can delegate to them. But part of the problem is that members of the church aren't letting the bishop escape this counseling role. So many bishops are not just counseling the people who were being counseled by the former bishop, but they are counseling the people who were counseled by the bishop before him. I mean, we're talking two, three bishops ago and they're still being counseled. That's the counseling that can be shifted. The counseling of adults can be shifted and delegated to others who are part of the storehouse so that the bishop can turn his attention to the rising generation and strengthen that rising generation.
- Hank Smith: 00:52:15 Brad, I love what you're saying here. Do you feel like the Lord is saying to the church today, President Nelson and the direction we've been given, the role of a bishop is not a counselor. Maybe it's worked for us in the past and hey, this is good. But there's some divine alignment happening here. Do you feel like...

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:52:39 Yeah, I think we need to have a cultural shift. Just as we were able to shift and say the bishop doesn't need to be a fundraiser anymore. We need now to shift and say the bishop doesn't need to be an adult counselor. He still needs to be the judge in Israel. He still needs to receive confessions. But he doesn't need to be a prolonged adult counselor. He needs to be able to work with the youth, council with the youth, build a relationship with the youth.

Hank Smith: 00:53:10 John, how much time would that have saved, that cultural shift, for you personally when you were bishop?

John Bytheway: 00:53:17 Yeah, it's a really good question because I think the hard part, the cultural shift, yeah would have saved me a lot of time. The idea of, "Don't pass me off to anybody else, I want to see the bishop." See that sort of a thing where there were so many capable men and women, brothers and sisters in the Lord's storehouse who could help with so many things. And the cultural shift has to say, "The bishop isn't the only one who can do this." And a lot of times you felt inadequate to do everything you're asked, as we've talked about.

John Bytheway: 00:53:53 And so when I was a bishop, I felt the cultural shift, the messages already coming. We need to push more of the work of salvation to the ward council. That was already happening before Scouts was discontinued and so forth. And I used to see sometimes that everybody was bringing their problems to ward council, which was great, but I tried to say, "Come with your recommendations." And my mission president was so... I did this to him once. I came to him with a problem. And he said, "Elder Bytheway, never come to your boss with a problem. Always come with a recommendation." He said, "A good leader trains leaders as he leads." And what is so exciting about this is, Brad, who's going to be included now in ward council?

Dr. Bradley R. ...: 00:54:48 Well, we know that the ward youth council will have all the youth presidents and the Young Women president there. And that's going to be a remarkable thing.

John Bytheway: 00:55:04 And the youth are going to be asked to do more. And so I love this idea of come with the recommendation and then people could study things out in their own minds and come, and we would, of course, still council together. But I love what Brad's talking about of the cultural shift to say that all of us as members can try to say, "How can I be part of the Lord's storehouse, help my brothers and sisters in the ward?" And maybe not always think of, "I got to call the bishop about this or that."

John Bytheway: 00:55:37 Brad, I love that the church has kind of combined elders quorum with the high priests. I think there's power in that. And one of the things that I actually did, as you're talking about, is one of the things that kind of weighed on me a lot, and every bishop's area is different, every bishop's congregation is different, but I had some significant welfare problems that weighed on me a lot. And I called a former bishop and his wife and they were my welfare counselors. And that was one of the best things I ever did because they had experience, that that could be their thing, and then they could come and we could counsel and they could make recommendations. And it was great. And when I saw them as part of the Lord's storehouse, it gave me more emotional energy for other things. So I just feel deeply for every bishop out there. I hope this is encouraging for them and is helping them today. Because I remember just thinking, "I can't do this all. I can't see a bishop in me."

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:56:45 If you think about it, we've made that cultural shift before. We've made it with General Authorities. I mean, they had to come out and say, "Please don't request that a General Authority perform the sealing for your child." If they get letters with people's questions, they will typically say, "Take this question to your stake president." If they get asked to give a blessing, they will typically say, "Ask your local leaders for that blessing." So as a church, most of us don't typically think, "Oh, I've got a problem. I better write to Elder Christofferson." "My daughter's getting married. I better call Elder Holland." We've made a cultural shift that says that's simply too much for those brethren to bear. And we need now to make the same cultural shift with our bishops and realize that they have a family to raise and they have a generation to raise. They have to take care of the rising generation and we've got to be able to back away and let them do what they're being asked to do by our prophet leaders.

Hank Smith: 00:58:05 And not be hurt. I know people are like, "Oh, but the bishop's not for me?" It can hurt the heart a little bit to make a cultural shift.

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:58:16 Yeah. "You mean Elder Holland won't marry my child, won't seal my child?" We have to be able to say, this is all part of the storehouse. This section, I've heard Ahmad Corbitt, who's the counselor who serves with me with President Lund in the Young Men General Presidency, he speaks about this often. Because as a stake president in New Jersey, he taught his bishops from this very section. He taught them look at verse 10, "You are to keep the Lord's storehouse to receive the offerings." Look at verse 15,

"Zion must lay all things before the bishop." And then in verse 19, "They should give an accounting to the bishop."

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:59:05 So the bishop's role is to manage this storehouse. And in the storehouse, we have people who can do counseling. And we're not saying that people don't need the counseling. We're just saying that it can be provided by other people who are part of this team, part of this storehouse. And that it doesn't always have to be the bishop. I often encourage bishops to start thinking of themselves more as a mission president. A mission president, doesn't say, "Oh, I could do the work of salvation so effectively if I didn't have these missionaries."

Hank Smith: 00:59:47 Right, "I'll go teach everyone in this area."

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 00:59:49 Yeah. "If I didn't have these missionaries, if I didn't have to plan parties for the missionaries, I could really get something done." No, he realizes that training those missionaries, preparing them as leaders, helping them do the work is more important than doing the work himself. And so if bishops could see themselves as a mission president and not see the youth as a burden, but see the youth as his arms, they are his missionaries. A mission president has assistants. So does a bishop. A mission president has zone leaders and district leaders. Well, the bishop has class and quorum presidencies. And if he will use these youth to do the work of salvation, he's going to find that the youth aren't one more thing on his plate, the youth can help him with everything else on his plate. And then we're going to really start seeing some progress be made.

Hank Smith: 01:00:50 I've never thought about people's talents being in the storehouse, but they are. A part of the storehouse is, "Hey, I've got this person in my ward who understands this issue. Maybe they're even a marriage counselor." They're part of our storehouse. Right? I love that. And the bishop can manage it. The bishop can manage the storehouse.

Dr. Bradley R. ....: 01:01:14 Yes. And that's what Brother Ahmad Corbitt did when he was a stake president. He taught his bishops to work that way in his stake in New Jersey. And they had some phenomenal results when they started thinking of the storehouse not just as a bunch of cans of food on a shelf, the bishop's storehouse. As we read this calling of Newel K. Whitney, we can realize that the storehouse includes the time. And the bishop is not out of place to ask other members for their time, for their talents and for their means to help him as he takes care of the other responsibilities that only he can do. The important thing here though is not just what the Whitneys gave, but that he was

called to manage the storehouse. And he was so effective in drawing on the talents of others. He didn't try to do it all himself. He called on others and helped others develop as leaders as they donated to the storehouse.

John Bytheway: [01:02:24](#) Oh. And if I could add something else, if you're using paper scriptures, which is what I use, you know, timeless, then you can't do this as easily. If you're scrolling, it's so cool, because in verse eight, "Now verily I say unto you, my servant Newel K. Whitney." Notice the words, Newel K. Whitney is the man. You can just underline that part.

Dr. Bradley R. ...: [01:02:46](#) Well remember, Newel K. Whitney, that's what Joseph Smith said.

John Bytheway: [01:02:52](#) Tell how Joseph Smith met him the first time. Tell it, Brad.

Dr. Bradley R. ...: [01:02:55](#) When Joseph Smith came to Kirtland, the first thing he did was go into Newel K. Whitney's store. And he said, "Thou art the man." And it was Newel and his wife, Elizabeth, who were very religious. And they had been praying for the Holy Ghost's guidance, and they felt the inspiration that they needed to prepare themselves to receive the word of the Lord. And so when Joseph Smith showed up, first the missionaries who taught Newel K Whitney and his wife, Elizabeth, and then Joseph Smith shows up and he says, "Thou art the man." He says, "You prayed me here. So what is it now that you would want me to do?" And he ended up living in Newel K. Whitney's home, along with many others that Newel K. Whitney cared for.

Hank Smith: [01:03:53](#) And his wife, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, becomes one of the closest friends of Emma Smith. They're very close friends. I think she's a counselor in the first Relief Society presidency.

John Bytheway: [01:04:06](#) Please join us for part two of this podcast.