

EPISODE 25 • PART II

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox



D&C 64-66

- John Bytheway: 00:02 Welcome to Part II of this week's podcast.
- John Bytheway: 00:07 Let's go into Section 65. It's short, it's only six verses. And I've heard it characterized as a prayer. Is that right? And am I thinking of the right one?
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 00:17 It says that in the section heading. No, it's not really a prayer until you get to the last verse, essentially, is the actual prayer. It's a prayer that God will come to believe in, not only the Latter-day Saints, early 1800s religious world, but in the broader religious world, was that Christ would come when his kingdom was established on Earth, okay. So we can hurry him here if we get this thing built.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 00:49 And so part of this is this longing lead that we get the kingdom of God built upon earth. So there's something for Jesus to come to, maybe with the idea of hurrying Him up a little bit. We didn't hit that back in 64, some of the Second Coming things.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 01:08 Section 64 says, "When is He coming?" And the answer is: tomorrow. So you can say, I know when Jesus is coming, when? He's coming tomorrow. That's back in 64. It's going to be wonderful when He comes.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 01:26 And to me, the key idea of Section 65 is, verses 3 and 4, "A voice crying, prepare." He started 65 with that word here again, "Hark and listen." Make the path straight because I'm coming." We're going to prepare for a wonderful thing. Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare. What? The Supper of the Lamb, make ready for the Bridegroom. Pray unto the Lord, call upon his holy name, make known his wonderful works. That's that idea we talked about before.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 02:13 If the world sees wonderful works among the Saints, then they'll be drawn to them. So make them known, verse 5, "That the inhabitants thereof may receive it, I make the works, people see it as wonderful, they're ready to receive it." Now it really, it's a little ironic here, but for Section 65 you really need a Russian

Orthodox sitting here at the microphone, and not me, because a Russian Orthodox, in particular, Greek Orthodox, would also, they understand Section 65 better than Latter-day Saints understand Section 65. They may understand Section 65 better than Joseph Smith himself understood Section 65 when he wrote it.

- Dr. S. Michael ...: 03:08 And so let me give you a little background on Orthodoxy, and the Supper of the Lamb and the Bridegroom. Then I'll read a Russian author and try and, instead of explaining to try and get people to feel section 65. Section 65, it was going to be prayer, I've got to feel it. And the Orthodox really feel it.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 03:35 For Latter-day Saints, the sacrament is a memorial for Western Christianity. The sacrament is a memorial, we look back at Gethsemane and the cross and his dying for us and bring it about redemption and mercy and forgiveness. It's a backward looking thing.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 04:03 But for the Orthodox, it's a forward-looking thing. It is not a memorial, it is a celebration, or a reminder that there will be a celebration coming. What is that celebration, the marriage supper of the lamb, which is what Joseph is referring to here in that third verse, we're going to prepare for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Section 27, just as a side note, is a very Orthodox: Mary and the prophets. And you're all having the sacrament together. So the Orthodox would say what you guys are looking forward to in Section 27. We celebrate every single Sunday. We look forward to the marriage supper. It's a reminder to us to live in a way that we can be in that future supper with the Bridegroom.
- Hank Smith: 05:40 It's forward looking.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 05:41 It's a forward-looking thing, right? It's not a past looking thing. I'm looking ahead to it. And because it's a supper, a feast that has made the story of Cana of Galilee and the marriage story... Cana, a very important story for the Russian Orthodox, because it's a marriage, and it's a foreshadowing they teach of the Marriage Supper, the first miracle of Jesus was not given to alleviate pain. The first miracle of Jesus was given to increase joy. We're learning something about the revealer, okay, in that particular miracle.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 06:32 So one of the greatest novels and again, I hope I'm approaching this right for you. One of the greatest novels in the history of the world is by Dostoevsky called The Brothers Karamazov, and in that the most Christ like fictional character ever created, is

introduced to us. It's an Eastern Orthodox, Russian Orthodox novice, he studied in a monastery, his name is Alyosha. And you can't read the Brothers Karamazov and not love that person. He is so Christ like, he represents the good spirit in all of us. He is the spirit of Christianity. Beautiful, beautiful individual. And he just goes around doing good. And he is trained by an old Father named Zosima, who's also a delightful man. You love these two characters.

- Dr. S. Michael ...: 07:43 And Father Zosima has died. I've set the stage for this, okay. Hopefully I'm doing it well enough. Father Zosima has died. And the belief of the peasants in Russia was that if you were a holy and a sacred man, when you died, you didn't smell. But as soon as father... it's a peasant belief, okay. This proves you were holy. But Father Zosima when he dies, the corpse begins to smell and it starts to smell in most people's eyes prematurely. And so they began to wonder if it was really a good man. And this just pains Alyosha to the heart because he loved this man. And so he's in the monastery kneeling in front of Father Zosima's coffin. And as he kneels there in sadness, the room expands. And suddenly, he is in Cana of Galilee at the marriage supper in Cana, okay.
- Hank Smith: 08:52 John, Chapter 2.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 08:53 John, Chapter 2. He's been transported in his mind, he is back in that spot, kneeling, only now the room has changed. I'm gonna just read a little bit, and then I got to tell you one other little thing, so that it all comes together. So this is the first part.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 09:20 I'm in his mind. Okay. But what's this? What's this? Why is the room expanding? Oh, yes, after all it's a marriage. A wedding. Yes, of course. Here are the guests. Here is the young couple sitting together. But who is this? Who? The room has expanded again? Who's that rising to his feet behind that big table over there? Is he here too? Why is he in his coffin? But he too is here. He has risen to his feet, has seen me, is coming over here. Oh merciful Lord. I'm going to stop here for just a second. So he sees Father Zosima now at Cana.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 10:18 Now, in order to understand what Father Zosima tells him after, there's another character in *The Brothers Karamazov*, I can't believe I'm teaching Russian literature here. But I can't think of any other way for people to get the power of Section 65. Like I say, you need a Russian here to teach you that about me.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 10:40 And there's another character, a woman called Grushenka, who was kind of a fallen woman. But Alyosha has, in his loving heart, recognized the goodness in her and it changes her, right? And

she tells him a story. It's a wonderful little story about an onion. And so the story goes like this. There's a woman in Jell, she's down there in the lake of fire and brimstone and her guardian angel is paying to see her that way. And so the guardian angel goes to God and pleads for her and says, "Isn't there anything we can do?" And he thinks, the angel thinks of one good thing she did. And he says, "She gave an onion from the garden to a beggar woman one day. And I will tell God, that."

Dr. S. Michael ...: 11:47

And remember, Muhammad? I told you that good deeds are always there, bad deeds can be forgiven, but good deeds never go away. Dostoevsky's belief was that the memory of a good thing that we had done was always with us, and could be very powerful later, to turn us. And so God says to the angel, "Take that very same onion and offer it to her in the lake, have her reach for it. And if you can pull her out of the lake. With that onion, she can go to heaven."

Dr. S. Michael ...: 12:27

And so the angel takes the onion and he offers it down to the woman he says, "Take hold of this." And she does. Slowly, carefully carefully, he pulls the woman out of the lake. But as she's just leaving the lake, the other sinners, seeing that she's being pulled out, grab onto her feet, so they can be pulled out with her. And she kicks at them and says, "It was my onion, not yours!" At which case, the onion breaks and she drops back into the lake. And the angel weeps and weeps and weeps for her.

Dr. S. Michael ...: 13:14

Now, Grushenka tells Alyosha that story, and she says, "I know the story very well. Because I am that woman. I've not done any good thing in my life. I've only given one onion." And she had done something good for Alyosha. Now again, the idea was not that one thing will save you, the idea that one thing can start pulling you. But not only you, it might also pull other people with you. So that's the story. Now I'm going to go back to Alyosha at the wedding, okay, so you'll understand what father Zosima says. Alyosha approached by Father Zosima, who's dead.

Dr. S. Michael ...: 14:03

"Yes, him. Him, did he approach the little wizened old man, with fine wrinkles on his face, joyful, and quietly laughing. His eyes shone. He too was at the feast, had also been called to the wedding in Cana of Galilee. I too, dear fellow, have been called, called and summoned. The quiet voice said clearly above him. You too must come and be with us. Let us be married and gay. The little wizened old man continued. Let us drink the new wine, the wine of new and great joy. You see how many guests there are. Here are the Bride and Bridegroom. Why do you marvel at me? I gave my onion and so I am here. Many here

have given only one onion, just one little onion. What do our other deeds matter?

- Dr. S. Michael ...: [15:16](#) “And you to my quiet fellow you to my meek boy, you too have given this day and onion to a woman who hungered for it. Begin dear fellow, begin meek one, your task. And do you see the Son? Do you see him? ‘I am afraid, I dare not look,’ Alyosha whispered. Don't be afraid of him. He is awesome in his greatness before us, in his loftiness. But he is infinitely merciful, has assumed our likeness. And with us is [inaudible 00:16:04], turns water into wine, that the joy of the guests be not broken off, awaits new guests, calls ever new ones, and will do so until the end of the ages. Here they come, bring new wine, you see, they are bringing the vessels.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [16:32](#) Something was burning and Alyosha his heart, something suddenly filled him to the point of physical pain, tears of joy burst from his soul. And he goes outside because the room is not big enough for the love that's expanding in his heart. He goes out under the stars and the light of all the stars coalesce in his soul, as if the message of all the universe was mercy and forgiveness. And he weeps for the earth. And a voice says ‘Drench the earth with these tears of yours Alyosha, drench them with these tears of joy.’ And Alyosha now prays for forgiveness, not for himself, but for all creation, believing that all creation would be praying forgiveness for himself.”
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [17:32](#) Now, I read a lot of Dostoevsky. And I'm telling you when he wrote that he was writing scripture, okay, that is literary scripture. There's a power in it. And that's the spirit of Section 65. We want the Supper, we want to go to the Supper, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. And we're all invited to that wonderful thing. And nobody has to feel that they are not welcome. I gave my onion. I love that line. I gave my onion.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [18:16](#) And so I'm invited. We talked earlier about Elder Holland's to talk on the parable--laborers in the vineyard. That's a big parable for the Orthodox again, like this Marriage of Cana is big. That's a big parable also. In fact, it is the Easter Sermon. Easter is the major celebratory moment in Orthodoxy and Russian Orthodoxy. The nativity, the birth of Christ is for Western Christianity, for Eastern Christianity, it's Easter.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [18:54](#) Everybody goes around on Easter morning and says, "Christ is risen." And you answer them. "Indeed, He is risen," and they're just full of joy. And they're looking forward to being with Him. They're all invited to supper, every Sunday, they're being reminded, I'm invited, I'm invited. And there's a special sermon

called the Easter Sermon. 1500 years old. And in it, the sermon demands that the priest who's giving the sermon offers an invitation.

- Dr. S. Michael ...: 19:38 And he quotes the parable. He says, "If there's anybody here who has labored from the first hour, let them come forth and be part of the feast. And if any of you have labored from the third hour, you come and those who have labored from the sixth hour, don't hesitate, you too are invited. And those who only labored from the ninth hour, let there be no fear in your heart, you too may come. And those who came at the 11th hour, be not hesitant, be not fearful for you, too are invited for forgiveness is risen from the grave."
- Hank Smith: 20:28 Wow.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 20:29 It's not a body that's risen from the grave. Forgiveness is risen from the grave. And then they go out and feast. Okay. It's just a wonderful thing. And Section 65 in our... we don't have that concept like the Orthodox do. We don't quite have that emotional connection. But you can see why it's a prayer. And if we really understand the Supper of the Lamb, the Bridegroom, the marriage, the wonderful works, we're going to make known to the world, then of course, we're going to prepare His way and make him straight. So we can come, we pray that we'll do our work here on earth so that he can come and we'll all be part of that wonderful thing. If we go to Luke, Chapter 12. It's a supper. It's a feast, right? Well, who's the waiter, who serves the feast? Most of us would think, well, Jesus is the Bridegroom, you and I are the bride. You and I are the Bride. But Luke 12 says Jesus serves the feast. He's the one who gets a feast of love. It's a feast of joy.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 21:55 The closest you and I may get to it is. Once in my life, I think I experienced a little bit of the Marriage supper of the Lamb and the Bridegroom was July 19, 1972, when I married Laura Chipman in the Alberta Temple. You probably can remember the day of your wedding. How do you think I felt that day, especially now that she's gone? As the best day of my life, the best day to be alive. And I love that girl. She's always 18 in my mind, always 18 in my mind, she's always the Bride.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 22:42 And I can't express how deep that was. And God says to me, Michael, do you understand the way you felt for Laurie on that day and as it groom, that's the way Jesus feels about you. The way you love Laurie, He loves you, and you love Him. And one day, we'll have the marriage. He's the Bridegroom. I'm the Bride who's the one that's the most loved at a wedding. It's the Bride.

The Bride gets all the attention. And Jesus is the Bridegroom so we want to be beautiful for him. And the beauty is our righteousness and our goodness.

- Dr. S. Michael ...: 23:42 That's what Section 65 for me is all about. But like I say, I can't just teach it. I try to make people feel that they have to feel it. Because if they feel it, we offer the prayer. And how does the Book of Revelation end actually, how does the whole Bible end? It ends in this prayer. It ends with a single word. "Come. Come Lord Jesus, Come." We want you to come. If somebody said to me, Michael, Jesus is coming tomorrow. Section 64 that's what he says, right. Section 64, I'm coming tomorrow. Are you prepared?
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 24:30 Section 65 is all about: prepare. He's coming tomorrow. Are you prepared? You know how I'd answer. I'd say I'm not prepared. I'm not prepared. But let Him come because He will take care of me. He has my heart. He has my mind. I can't always do it the way He wants me to do it. But let Him come, I will put my trust totally in him, in His love and in His mercy, let him come, I pray, come tomorrow, Lord. Come! Come! Because I know I'm invited, I give my onions. And everybody out there you give your onion, you just keep giving those onions, be not weary in well doing, do the little things, you are laying the foundation of a great work. And that work is the development of your own Christlike character.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 25:37 And you all have willing and ready minds. And that's what He wants. That's what he wants. That's Section 65 to me.
- Hank Smith: 25:50 You reminded me of a quote from I think, I actually got this from you, Mike, from your book on William Tyndale. It was called *Fire in the Bones*. And this is William Tyndale talking about scripture. He said, "Though we read scripture, and babel of it ever so much, yet if we know not the use of it, and wherefore it was given, it profiteth us nothing at all. It is not enough to read and talk of it only, it being scripture, we must desire God day and night to open our eyes to make us understand and feel wherefore the scripture was given, understand and feel." When you said, "I don't want you to just read it, I want you to feel it." That's William Tyndale.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 26:43 Yeah, we want to feel, like I say, we want to see, it's not so much the doctrine that we what is revealed, we want to see the Revealer, we want to find Him behind the words and Section 65 has to be felt. You gotta feel it.

- John Bytheway: 27:03 But let's go look at Section 66. You've mentioned a couple of times, William McClellan, And what's what's happening here?
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 27:15 William McClellan, he's not going to last in the Church, unfortunately, he'll have some problems and eventually leave the Church will try even when they go out to Utah, the leadership who knew him because he was one of the original Twelve Apostles, will try to bring him back. And he will write kind of a sad but somewhat gracious letter back saying, "I just don't believe it anymore." So, it's kind of a sad story.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 27:45 It's an interesting section. Verse 3 is a verse that we can relate to ourselves. He says, "You are clean, but not all." I think that probably says that to all. We all have things we need to change. There are some things that aren't pleasing to me, but I'll show them to you. And that's kind of a scary thing for me.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 28:15 I'm sure the Lord would say, "Mike, there's a lot, you're clean, you're you're doing good. But there's some things that you need to change. Would you like me to show them to you?" And my answer is probably back to me, that is, "Lord, I really don't need you to show them to me, because I'm already aware of what they are." But I have noticed that when I give Him that response, what often happens is, things that I may be feeling are the ones that I most have to work on. And maybe I'm most ashamed of God's not that distressed by. Sometimes I think, "Oh, we can handle that Mike."
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 28:57 And then there are other things that maybe I don't think is such a big deal. That maybe He says, "Well, maybe we got to work on this a little bit more." I think the one thing I really like is that I would least maybe give it thought on in Section 66. We've mentioned it before, but I really like verse 7.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 29:22 He's telling me to go to the Eastern Lands again. Okay, you're not clean, you've got some problems and I'll show you that. But I'm still calling you. I want you to preach the gospel and we can handle the negatives of your life. It's the positives, we got to get into it. So you go into the Eastern Lands, bear testimony in every place, we're on to every people and in their synagogues, reasoning with the people. We see that a lot, don't revile reason. You probably already did Section 50, brilliantly, I'm sure where the Lord says, "I'm going to reason with you." Isn't that interesting? Here's God who doesn't need a reason with us, he can just command.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 30:07 But He still reasons. His, "I'll reason with you and I want you to go and read." He's always the example of what he asks us to do.

"I'll reason with you." The first principle we learn in Section 121, of priesthood leadership of any leadership is persuasion. Persuasion, back in the days when they were burning people of the Reformation, Erasmus was one of the first humanists, one of the first Reformers, a beautiful, beautiful man from the Netherlands. And he said, "It takes no great effort to burn a little man. But it's a great achievement if you can persuade him."

- Dr. S. Michael ...: 30:47 So the proper way is to reason with people not to revalue, reason you work with them. And God does that, like set back Section 50. I'll reason with you. He's going to show us the example. The idea that I would just give a thought, because I've been thinking about it lately is bear testimony. And I'm just gonna take us back to the Book of Mormon for a second.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 31:14 Another way that testimony can be born, what is the chief testimony phrase of the Church?
- John Bytheway: 31:24 I know.
- Hank Smith: 31:25 I know the Church .. .
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 31:27 I know the Church. And what's the word we used to describe the Church: True.
- Hank Smith: 31:31 The Church is true.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 31:32 There's nothing wrong with that phrase. It's just like other things, we sometimes use it so much that it loses some meaning. Now, one of the things I do occasionally in scripture is I pretend I don't have the word anymore. And see what I use instead. So for instance, if you didn't have the word prayer, what would you use? And the one I come up with is "pour out." And somehow for me "pour out" is better than prayer.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 31:58 What if you didn't have the word atonement? Oh, my gosh, would that hamper us? What are you going to use to try and describe what Jesus does for us if you don't have that word anymore? Well, what if we didn't have the word so the phrase I know this Church is true, I'm going to go to Ether, chapter 4, verse 11, and 12. And then maybe if we have time to jump over to Mormon. Notice what the Lord, what we have in Ether. I just want to give us another way of bearing testimony, that's all. Because that's what the doctrine comes to all the time, bear test and go out and teach, bear test, bear test. And the focus we always have is on the word true. The Church is true.

- Dr. S. Michael ...: [32:44](#) Verse 11, Ether 4, “He that believeth things, which I have spoken, him while I visit with the manifestations of my spirit, and he shall know that's where we like to use, and bear record.” Now, do you notice anything strange about that? It's backwards. It's backwards from our own item four we always use. I read the Book of Mormon or I studied the Church, I pray about it, the Spirit tells me it's true. Now I can believe it. And no. But here he's saying, “No, I want you to believe first, believe first, then the spirit will manifest. And then you'll know when you can bear record.” And I say, “Wait Lord, this is backwards. You've got to tell me it's true first.”
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [33:41](#) And you tell me through the Spirit, and then I bear record? He says no, you believe first. Now how do I get to that believe spot? The second sentence in verse 11. “Because of my spirit, he shall know that these things are true; for it persuaded men to do good. And whatsoever thing persuaded men to do good is of me. For good cometh have none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men.” There's that leadeth them, reason with them, persuade them, leads man to all good. Now, Moroni 4, our major verse. I love Moroni 4. Puts all the responsibility on God pretty much, doesn't it? He's got to tell me it's true.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [34:45](#) Here, God puts it on me. He says, “Mike, you have to make a decision. You're reading the Book of Mormon. You're reading the Doctrine and Covenants. You're studying Joseph Smith. You're trying to decide if it's true and right. What I want you to do is decide, does it persuade you to do good? You have to come to that decision.” And so I read the Book of Mormon. And when I'm done with it, I'd say, “Yeah, this book persuades me to do good.”
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [35:19](#) I just read section 64. What is that persuadest me to do? Forgive. So what do I know? I know it's of God. That's what he's saying.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [35:31](#) Now ,I'll manifest the spirit, okay, but you need to find out and decide if it persuades to do good. I get two more wonderful verbs, and then I'll tie it into Section 66. In Moroni 7, which is Mormon's great speech on faith, hope, charity, and always add humility. The Book of Mormon has four virtues, not just faith, hope and charity. Faith, hope, charity, humility.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [36:05](#) So if I go Moroni 7, verse 12. And I'm going to do this quickly. “All things which are good cometh of God.” Then verse 13, “Behold, that which is of God, inviteth and enticeth.” Now, I get two nice new verbs to go with persuadeth: inviteth and enticeth to do good continually. “Wherefore everything which inviteth

and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God." Skip down the verse 15, "It is given unto you to judge." You've got to do something, don't just come and ask me. You make a decision.

- Dr. S. Michael ...: 37:01 Is this Doctrine and Covenants? Is this Joseph Smith? Russell M. Nelson, does this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Does this Jesus of Nazareth? My heavens ,does this Confucius or Buddha or Shakespeare or Michelangelo's art, or Beethoven's music or spread it out as far as you want? Does it persuade me and invite me and entice me to do good to love God, to serve Him? You judge, the way to judge is as plain that she may know where the perfect knowledge as the daylight is from the dark night. "I show unto you the way to judge, everything which inviteth to do good, and persuadest to believe in Christ to set forth by the power." You look at Alma 32, I think Alma 32 is interesting, in that Alma 32, you plant the seed. And when he first mentioned planting the seed of testimony in your heart, which is what William E. McClellan has got to go out and do, he's got to go out and plant the seeds, he's got to bear testimony.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 38:13 He starts by saying, if the seed is a true seed, the word we like, I know this church is True. And a good seed, it'll do these things for you. And then he drops one of those two words, all through the rest Alma 32. Which of the two words do you think Alma drops? True, or good?
- Hank Smith: 38:36 He drops true.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 38:37 He drops true, and it's good. Every now and then, I do this. Sometimes I wonder if it disturbs my ward members. I don't say, "I know this church is true." I say, "I want to bear my testimony," which is what McClellan is supposed to do. I know this church is good. I know the Book of Mormon is good. I know that Joseph Smith was a good person. He taught good things. He expanded man's concept of himself to a premortal world on one side and an eternal divine destiny on the other side.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 39:27 He made God more approachable and humanity nobler. This boy prophet. He taught us that obscure boys and girls can speak to God and be listened to and answered. I know he's good. I know the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints inspires goodness in people. It's people are not perfect people. But I challenge you to find a better people on the face of the earth than the Latter-day Saints, who with willing heart and mind are trying every way they can to be like Christ. I don't know that I have born a weaker testimony than if I said, "I know this church

is true. I know that Joseph was a true prophet, even of Jesus. I know Jesus of Nazareth was a good man, he taught good things.”

- Dr. S. Michael ...: 40:40 And so we take that testimony out to the world. Sometimes true, can be a little bit harder to discern. But goodness is a little bit easier to discern. I know the men who lead this church and the women are good people. And they're trying to do good things. I know the Doctrine and Covenants, I believe and I believe is okay. It doesn't have to be, I know.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 41:13 I believe, I hope those are okay also. That's what God is, again, trying to get the feel of Section 66, what his offering is remote William E. McClellan. And that he offers to everybody, is always telling them all, go out. There are wonderful things, go out into the world and show them all the goodness, and they'll be drawn to you as you show them all that goodness.
- Hank Smith: 41:46 It says that in verse 11, you'll push many people to Zion, with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads, they'll be drawn to that.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 41:55 Yeah, that's the joy of the gospel. And that's a good place to end that joy. Because I love Section 128. Joseph Smith asked the question, here's the question we should all ask ourselves. What do we hear in the Gospel, which we have received? And sadly, some Latter-day Saints hear guilts and toxic perfectionism and inadequacy and judgment and this one time where Joseph Smith answers his own question. “Now, what do we hear in the Gospel we have received?” And what does he say, “Of voice of gladness, a voice of mercy.” That's what we hear. And then you repeat that over and over again. And he gives us what I call The Great Hymn of the Restoration. As he thinks about all that God has given, he thinks about all the Doctrine and Covenants sections that have come before Section 128. Nauvoo period and of his life coming. And as he looks back, shall we not go forward and saw greater cause, on to the victory?
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 43:08 The Orthodox would say, “On, onto the Marriage Supper, onto the feast, where Jesus himself will be there.” And that's the message, the testimony we bear to the world. Yes, it's true. I love the word. I know this Church is true. But I love better. I know this church and Joseph, and Jesus, and the scriptures are good, they are good.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 43:42 And that is the goodness we want to offer to the world, so the world will come singing songs of everlasting joy. Like

Dostoevsky said the Marriage Supper we'll be, let us be gay, Jesus his first miracle, make us happy. That's what we want.

- Hank Smith: [44:02](#) Beautiful. You have been studying and teaching from the scriptures for how long now?
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [44:09](#) Well, I'm retired you know, so I do tours, we take people around the world. I taught for about 40 years full time, mostly Institute. But we've been teaching these since the mission field, six decades anyway.
- Hank Smith: [44:29](#) Six decades. I think our listeners would love to hear personal thoughts on Joseph Smith, his contemporaries, and the Restoration.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [44:41](#) I think I've been really blessed and being able to travel a great deal and because I am taking people and I want them to love everywhere they go. I'm trying to find the goodness that every culture, religion, people, country on Earth. People say what's your favorite country and I say, "God didn't make a bad country.' I think what I have taken from that, and then I'll apply it to Joseph Smith is, I think I grew up with a very narrow perspective. That God spoke to man, through prophets, the Old Testament, and then the Apostles and Jesus, then we had the Book of Mormon, and there was a Restoration. And we'll give a little credit to some of the Reformers. But it wasn't it narrow?
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [45:34](#) And having read a great deal now of world religions, and history, this is what I would say, I believe that God has been speaking to his children every way He can, all the time, everywhere. But that He has many different voices. And then it's not a limited, it was a Great Apostasy. And He's been speaking every way he can, everywhere, all the time. And if you can't hear the voice of a prophet, or an apostle, maybe you can hear the voice of a sage, or a poet, or a playwright, or an artist, or an architect, or a scientist, or in the lives of just really good people.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [46:33](#) And as I look at all those, all that truth, all that goodness, I come to understand, I think what Joseph Smith meant that he probably maybe himself didn't even understand it up to the level that we can't understand it, what the fullness of times means, that you and I are offered here in 2021, all the goodness and all the truth and all the beauty that God has everywhere all the time, then sending down on Earth. It is so massive, so vast, I cannot comprehend it all. I can't get it all in, there is no end to goodness.

- Dr. S. Michael ...: 47:20 And in the midst of all this majesty and goodness, here is this boy, in a grove of trees, praying. And he belongs in that great conversation. What he gave to the world in goodness and truth and beauty, belongs right up there with Confucius and the Buddha and Moses and our Book of Mormon people, he's very comfortable in that group. Like I say, this is the audacity of Joseph, that's so magnificent. I'm going to give you temples again, nobody's doing temples. I'm going to correct your scriptures. I'm going to give you a new scripture. We're going to bring apostles back where the body is a good thing.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 48:17 Like I say, he gave man a premortal existence, Section 93. We've always existed, we're destined to be gods, something CS Lewis comes up with out of the New Testament, he just fits and rises. The more I study things in the world, the more I love Joseph Smith, because the greater he is he fits, it's easy to be a critic. And there's a lot of people that criticize Joseph, it's a lot harder to be a creator.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 49:02 And look, he created the Latter-day Saint people, maybe his greatest creation. We have our problems. We're not perfect. Our history is not perfect. There are things I wish I could change in our history. But we're trying, we're a magnificently striving people. And it's Joseph that really helped to create all that. I love the Prophet Joseph Smith. But it's that boy, I think the greatest words Joseph Smith ever said is to his mother after the First Vision, "All is well, all is well, all is well."
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 49:49 Because of Joseph Smith, all as well in my life, no matter what happens, from what he taught me. And then he said, "I have learned for myself." And I love those five words. Because he says you too can learn for yourself. You can learn for yourself. There are a few very, very unique people, I'll conclude with this, in history, that I think had a special gift. We talked about the gifts of the Spirit. That was Section 46.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 50:26 There is a very rare, I believe it's a gift. This is Wilcox 35, 2- whatever. I believe there is gift called the gift of religion, for lack of a better word, that some people are just gifted to bring into existence faith, a faith, religion, a people, a community, a way of life.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: 50:58 Few people had it. Confucius did it and made the Chinese. What is so wonderful about the Asian people today. The Buddha had it. Muhammad had it. Jesus certainly had. Moses had it. And I believe Joseph Smith simply had the gift of religion, the gift of being able to give to his fellow man, a way of life, a philosophy and an approach that cause them to yearn to be better people,

to be the all that they can be, too. We were born to be large in soul, large in soul.

- Dr. S. Michael ...: [51:54](#) And Joseph Smith showed us that largeness in a way very few people can. And so I love Joseph Smith, one day I'm going to tell him how grateful I am for what he did. With all his faults, which Jesus himself admits, but then let us celebrate the good. And forget everything else. Because that's what I want people to do with me. Anyway, thank you for letting me talk about Joseph Smith, just talking about him and the Doctrine and Covenants and the Savior and his mercy. It's wonderful.
- Hank Smith: [52:47](#) John, What is it? "It is good for us to be here," right? Is that the phrase where it is for us to be here?
- John Bytheway: [52:57](#) I love when Peter said that. That's the understatement of all time. That up on the Mount of Transfiguration. And yeah, this, I was just gonna say, Hank, and this is one that I want to listen to again, like right now and just take better notes. I learned a lot and I learned the spirit of some of these sections I've been blessed. Thank you, Brother Wilcox.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [53:23](#) My pleasure. Thank you. It was mine. I've thought recently Jesus with the children. The children needed him. But he needed the children too. There was something beautiful, suffered little children to come unto me. Not so I can bless them. But because I need them around me.
- Dr. S. Michael ...: [53:50](#) And that's usually the way it is for all things. It's nice to feel maybe you did some good out there for somebody. But I am the main beneficiary of what we've done today. And so I thank you for the opportunity.
- Hank Smith: [54:08](#) We absolutely loved it. We want to thank you, Dr. Michael Wilcox, for being with us today. We want to thank all of you for listening. We are so grateful for your support. We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen. Our production crew, and awesome team, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Nielsen, Kyle Nelson, Will Stockton and Maria Hilton, and we hope that you will join us on our next episode of followHIM.