

EPISODE 26 • PART I

Dr. C. Robert Line



D&C 67-70

Hank Smith:	<u>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>00:09</u>	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:10</u>	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:11</u>	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:13</u>	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:15</u>	As together we follow him.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:20</u>	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith and I am here with my selfless co-host, John Bytheway. Hi, John.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:30</u>	Wow. I hadn't heard that adjective before. Thank you. You're moving through the dictionary there.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:34</u>	Hey, if people knew you well, they would know how selfless you are.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:37</u>	Oh, that's very nice, thanks.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:39</u>	We are excited to be here. We are on social media, just so everybody knows. You can find us on Instagram and Facebook. You can get show notes at followhim.C-O , followhim.co , and please rate and review our podcast. That helps us a lot. Well, John, every week we have an opportunity to hear from one of the church's great minds. And we give that chance again this week. Who is with us?
John Bytheway:	<u>01:08</u>	Oh, I'm so excited. Today we have Brother C. Robert Line. He has worked full-time with religious education for the past 29 years. In addition to teaching with BYU Religious Education, he's been a presenter at BYU Education Week, Women's Conference,

Especially For Youth, and has worked for CES programs as an instructor and director for Institutes of Religion. Brother Line has both a bachelor's and master's degree from BYU and also a doctoral degree from Purdue University in Sociology of Religion. He has authored various books and articles, has served as the editor in chief of Century Magazine. He played on the BYU men's basketball team from 1984 to '85, and he and his wife, Tamera Wright Line have five children and six grandchildren, almost seven, and they live in Cedar Hills. Brother Line, welcome to our podcast today.

- Dr. C. Robert L...: 02:08 Hey, thanks so much. Appreciate it. It's really, really good to be with you guys.
- Hank Smith: 02:13 Yeah. Brother Line, we're so excited to have you and a former star athlete for the BYU Cougars. This is big. 1984 was a big year for BYU.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 02:24 1984, yeah. Your listeners, some might have heard the names of Marty Haws and Andy Toolson and Jeff Chatman. Full disclosure, those guys were the stars and I was the benchwarmer and that's the total truth. I was just honored to be a part of the program, so...
- Hank Smith: 02:42 You got to watch them play close up.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 02:44 Yes, yes. Yeah, I taught-
- Hank Smith: 02:47 I've always thought that.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 02:47 I taught them everything they know about sitting on the bench, so...
- Hank Smith: 02:51 Yeah...
- Hank Smith: 02:53 Well, let's jump in to this week's lesson. Dr. Line. We're studying sections 67-70. These were all received in November of 1831. Now, the church is, just as a reminder to our listeners, is a year and a half old, it's still brand new. I've looked ahead a little bit Brother Line, and I've seen that a lot of these sections have to do with the printing of these revelations. So let's back up a bit, let's let you take over and say, okay, what do we need to understand in order to get the most out of these sections?
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 03:28 And again, thanks for having me on. These are some interesting sections. And a little bit of background, one of the things you'll notice, first of all, reading section 67-70 is... And you'll see these

two threads all the way through the Doctrine of Covenants. But one of them is the whole concept of Zion, which you mentioned Hank, the building of the city of the new Jerusalem. I'm sure you've talked about that in other recordings that you guys have done. But Zion, Elder Christofferson said is both a place and a people. The other thing that these sections touch upon is this book called the Book of Commandments. I think many of your listeners probably know that this was the original forerunner to the Doctrine of Covenants. You have two church centers at the time, one in Kirtland and one in Independence, Missouri. The press is eventually going to get destroyed by anti-Mormon mobs there in Missouri. Never does come about, and it's not till 1835 that you get the printing of what was then renamed the Doctrine of Covenants, 102 sections unlike what we have now with 138 sections, so Zion, Law of Consecration, Book of Commandments.

- Dr. C. Robert L...: 04:47 One thing your listeners might be interested in, I find a lot of my students that I teach don't know this, but the Book of Commandments, there were only partial productions. In fact, today I think there's only like about 30 to 40, maybe 50 extent copies of the Book of Commandments. If any of you ever find one, bring it to me and John.
- Hank Smith: 04:13 I'll gladly hold onto that for you.
- John Bytheway: 05:17 So let's go right into section 67 and talk about who is this given to and what are some of the what's some of the content we can talk about here?
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 05:29 Your readers if they go into the section heading, they'll see there that this conference that had approved the publication of the Book of Commandments, they originally had approved 10,000 copies, which back then is quite a lot. Even the book of Mormon, how many was the book of Mormon? I think it was 5,000 original copies.
- Hank Smith: 05:51 5,000 copies.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 05:51 Which was unheard of back then to do a book run that big on an original book that nobody knows about. So 10,000 is pretty big, it speaks to how much, not only the church has grown to this point in a year and a half, but the faith that the leaders have of doing missionary work and going out. That's a pretty cool thing that would probably be lost on a lot of people. I think out of all of the sections, this one has, not that the other ones don't have any meat, but this one is pretty immediate, it's got some good stuff in it. It involves a guy that I think some people have heard

of, he's a lesser known individual in church history named William E. McLellin. And William E. McLellin, he's actually going to show up in the section prior to this, section 66 and then in 75 as well. In fact if it's okay, could we do a little bit of context on William E. McLellin first?

Hank Smith: 06:47

Let's do it.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 06:48

Because he's going to be the centerpiece behind this controversy that is going to come up in section 67. And just a little bit about William E. McLellin, he's a contemporary of Joseph Smith. Joseph is born in 1805, December of 1805 if you remember, just a few weeks later, 18th of January, 1806, William E. McLellin was born, isn't baptized until the summer of 1831, is going to become an apostle in 1835. You just don't see things like that today, right?

Hank Smith: 07:21

Right. Four years later.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 07:26

People who are 25, 30 years old, new converts becoming apostles, but that was part and parcel back then. The unfortunate thing about him is he's going to apostatize in 1838, but he's going to die outside of the faith in 1883, never does come back. He was a school teacher by profession. And one of the reasons that's important to note, school teachers today often get a bad rap or they get no rap at all. But back in that day, being a school teacher was a lofty profession. You were considered to be an intellectual if you were a trained schooled teacher. So William E. McLellin, he had a lot of standing in the church.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 08:13

So let's just dive in to section 67:1, "Behold and hearken o, ye elders in my church who have assemble yourself together, whose prayers I have heard, whose hearts I know, and whose desires have come up before me." Skipping down to verse four, "I, the Lord, give unto you testimony of the truth of these commandments which are lying before you." What's the context there? Well, it's not the 10 commandments, that's a good application. But when it says of these commandments, that's a specific reference to the Book of Commandments. Now, why would he say this? "I, the Lord I'm..." Usually we give testimony to people about the scriptures. But this is a real cool instance for the Lord is giving testimony of the truth of the scriptures that are before you.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 09:00

Now, why would he do this? Well, there, there is an interesting thing that occurs. And as they're beginning to get ready, the Book of Commandments for publication and this conference

approves the printing of this book, there comes this question about the wording of some of the revelations. And there were some members that were part of a group who felt quite frankly that this really wasn't the Lord, that it was canned and maybe even hammed up language, and that this was just Joseph speaking.

- John Bytheway: 09:37 Okay, verse five, "Your eyes have been upon my servant Joseph Smith Jr. and his language you have known, and his imperfections you have known. And you have sought in your hearts knowledge that you might express beyond his language, this you also know.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 09:53 We'll stay with the history and the context for a moment, but I want to come back to that. Because I think that's an interesting concept, especially in the church today with all the faith crisis stuff, fake transitioning stuff that's going on with this idea of not just imperfections that members have, but imperfections that... That's interesting that the Lord would say, "And his imperfections, you have known." Let's come back and talk about this. Hank, verse six.
- Hank Smith: 10:18 Now, seek ye out of the Book of Commandments, even the least that is among them, and appoint him that is the most wise among you. Or if there be any among you that shall make one like unto it, then ye are justified in saying that ye do not know that they are true." So give it a try.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 10:36 You're right, yeah. And then verse eight. "But if you cannot make one like unto it, you are under condemnation if you do not bear record that they are true." Well, this group, they actually decided to take, you could say it's Joseph's challenge, but really it's the Lord's challenge. See if you can write a revelation and make it sound like it's from the Lord. You're saying Joseph is writing revelations on his own and trying to make it sound like it's from the Lord. Well, see if you can do this. And so a point among you the one that is most wise, verse six. Guess who they chose to do that. Yeah, it's none other than William E. McLellin was chosen. And we won't go too much into the history of it and there's not a lot of history other than he tried and basically failed miserably to do this. It was a pretty strong witness to this group that, Hey, yeah, this challenge that the Lord has issued, it really panned out. So that's interesting.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 11:34 I'd love to hear your thoughts, either Hank or John, about verse five and this idea of, "His language you have known, his imperfections you have known. You've sought in your heart that you might express beyond his language." Could I read a quote

real quick to maybe frame where I'd like to go with that. I'm sure both of you are very familiar with this. But back in conference, October conference, 2013, President Uchtdorf, at the time President Uchtdorf now he's Elder Uchtdorf, he spoke and he gave a talk that I don't know if rattled the church is the way to frame it, but he said some things about leaders and their imperfections that really caused a stir in the church. It's not scripture, it's not doctrine, but we have a culture sometimes of an infallibility. Isn't it interesting Joseph even talks about his weaknesses. Mormon says, "Hey, if there's weakness, if there's imperfections or mistakes in this record, there are the mistakes of men."

Dr. C. Robert L...: 12:44

Here's what President Uchtdorf said, and again I'd love to get you guys' thoughts on this. He said, "Some struggle with unanswered questions about things we have done or said in the past. We openly acknowledged that in nearly 200 years of church history, along with an uninterrupted line of inspired, honorable, and divine events, there have been some things said and done that could cause people to question. And to be perfectly frank, there have been then times when members or leaders in the church have simply made mistakes. There may have been things said or done that were not in harmony with our values, principles, or doctrine." And I love that, I think that's very healthy and refreshing to know that this is not the church of men, it's the church of Jesus Christ.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 13:30

Here's one more quote and then I'd love to get you guys' thoughts on this before we go back into section 67. In a document called Approaching Mormon Doctrine in LDS Newsroom, this was written back in 2007, approved by the first presidency. It says this, "Not every statement made by a church leader, pastor present necessarily constitutes doctrine. A single statement made by a single leader on a single occasion often represents a personal. Though well considered opinion, but is not meant to be officially binding on the whole church. With divine inspiration, the first presidency and quorum of the 12 council together to establish doctrine that is consistently proclaimed in the official church publications."

Dr. C. Robert L...: 14:15

So I love this idea and I love that idea of the Lord saying, "Hey, you know Joseph's perfections, there's times when prophets make a mistake." Joseph one time set a prophet was only a prophet when he was speaking as such. So I'd love to hear, Hank, John, what are your thoughts about that, about this idea of as members of the church not being critical of the brethren but realizing, hey, sometimes mistakes are made, it doesn't

happen often. But boy, how could that help us be better disciples?

- Hank Smith: 14:50 I think it's one of the reasons the Lord gives us 15 leaders and their spouses, right?
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 15:00 Right.
- Hank Smith: 15:00 Because there's a lot of variety there to encompass members of the church from all the whole spectrum of beliefs. This is one of my favorite thoughts from Lorenzo Now. John, I don't know if I've shared this before. But he said this in 1900, he said, "70 years ago, this church was organized with six members. We commenced, so to speak, as an infant. We had our prejudices to combat, our ignorance troubled us into regard to what the Lord intended to do and what he wanted us to do. We advanced to boyhood and still we undoubtedly made some mistakes, which generally arise from a lack of experience. We understand very well when we reflect back upon our own lives that we did many foolish things when we were boys." Any of you do foolish things ever, I don't of whether...
- Hank Smith: 15:49 "Yet as we advanced, the experience of the past materially assisted us to avoid such mistakes as we had in our boyhood. It is so with the church, our errors have generally arisen from a lack of comprehending what the Lord required us to do. But we are now pretty well along to manhood." And he says, "We ought to congratulate ourselves in this direction, but we certainly ought not to feel that we have yet arrived at perfection." I love that idea that the church is a growing living thing and it's going to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes just like all of us grow and learn from our mistakes. I don't know about you guys, but I have learned by really sad, painful experiences of what not to do. I don't know, John definitely has not had as many experiences as I have with that. In all of our conversations, it's usually him saying, "Oh wow, you did that?" But the church is the same thing for me.
- John Bytheway: 16:56 When I was reading this to get ready for today in verse five, "Your eyes have been upon Joseph Smith." And it's like, where should your eyes be? I'm thinking of Peter walking on water and as soon as he took his eyes off Christ, that's when he started to sink. So I drew a line from verse five to verse nine. So the Lord says, "Okay, look at the revelations, there is no unrighteousness in them." I don't know, I connected those two. You're looking at Joseph, but look at these revelations and they are beyond Joseph, they are beyond a farm boy, they're coming down from above, from the father of lights. I thought that was cool.

Dr. C. Robert L...:	<u>17:34</u>	That's a really cool phrase, isn't it? Father of lights.
Hank Smith:	<u>17:38</u>	The assumption that we make that the Lord's church is never going to make an error. That's not something that the Lord has ever said, he's never said that. We get this assumption somewhere.
John Bytheway:	<u>17:54</u>	Do we want to hold other prophets to the same standard?
Hank Smith:	<u>18:00</u>	Out of the scriptures?
John Bytheway:	<u>18:01</u>	Doesn't it say Moses killed an Egyptian? And what did Jacob tell Afeb about his wife? That's my sister. And the reformers, do we want to hold them to the same standard? I don't know. We're holding Joseph to a pretty high standard here.
Hank Smith:	<u>18:18</u>	In Luke chapter nine, James and John want to burn down [crosstalk 00:15:29], they want to blow it up.
Hank Smith:	<u>18:25</u>	Listen to this story. I'll read this from J. Reuben Clark. He said he remembered a simple story, my father told me as a boy, I do not know on what authority, but it illustrates the point. His story was that during the excitement incident to the coming of Johnston's army, Brother Brigham preached to the people in the morning meeting a sermon vibrant with defiance to the approaching army and declaring an intention to oppose and drive them back. In the afternoon meeting, he arose and said that Brigham Young had been talking in the morning but the Lord was going to talk now. He then delivered an address, the temple of which was opposite that of the morning talk. So I think it's very refreshing like you said, Rob.
Dr. C. Robert L...:	<u>19:14</u>	One other thought on this before we go on. I don't know how many of your listeners are familiar, I think all of us are familiar with Official Declaration 2, the revelation in 1978, priesthood going to all worthy males, what a breath of fresh air that was. Elder McConkie gave a talk to church educators, if you remember, in August of 1978, about two months after the revelation came out. And let me just read part of what he said. Speaking of the verse in 2 Nephi, I think it's 26 where it says, "All are alike unto God, he denied them none." He says these words have taken on new meaning, we have caught a new vision of their true significance. Isn't that interesting on an possible saying that? This has taken on new meaning for us, we've got a new vision.

- Dr. C. Robert L...: 20:07 He says this also applies to a great number of passages. Since the Lord gave revelation on the priest that our understanding of many passages of has expanded. Many of us never imagine or suppose that they had the extensive broad meaning that they do have. I want to read more of the statement, but isn't that cool? An apostle saying, "Hey, we're learning, we're growing, the Lord's continuing to reveal things." And then he goes on and he says, "There are statements in our literature that people hold onto and they say, 'Hey, Brigham Young and George Hugh Canon, and you guys said certain people would never have the priesthood.' And now we do how is it that you said that?" And he says this, I love this, he says, "Forget everything that I have said or what Brigham Young or Georgie Hugh Canon or whomever has said in days past that is contrary to present revelation." And then he says this, "We spoke with limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that has now come into the world."
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 21:03 The reason I mentioned this, I think you could even make the case that there are some things that we taught back in the '70s and '80s, President Kimball and President Benson Taft of theological paradigms that maybe we have moved away from or that we don't emphasize. I think what's that going to be like in 20 or 30 years from now? I guess the bigger question, if I feel disgruntled about Book of Mormon translation issues, Book of Abraham translation issues, differences in the first vision accounts, LGBTQ issues, women in the priesthood issues, where is it that the Lord is eventually leading this church? Because as President Nelson said, with the dedication of the Rome Temple, he says, "This church isn't done being restored yet. This is an ongoing restoration." And to understand that, I think that could help people so much with a lot of these faith crisis questions.
- Hank Smith: 22:04 Absolutely. I remember a quote I read from Brigham Young, I'll have to find it and put it in our show notes. But he said, "I saw Joseph's imperfections and mistakes." He said, "But he was the Lord's prophet not mine. And if the Lord wanted to correct him, it was between him and the Lord." So I like that idea, that let the Lord do this work. President Hinckley said this, he said, "I have worked with seven presidents of the church. I recognize that all have been human, but I have never been concerned over this. They may have had some weaknesses, but this has never troubled me. I know that the God of heaven has used mortal men throughout history to accomplish his divine purposes." I think it was Lorenzo Snow who said he loved that the prophet Joseph Smith had weaknesses because he said, "I felt like there was hope for me."

Dr. C. Robert L...: 23:02 Could we go back one section now to section six.

Hank Smith: 23:05 Let's do it.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 23:06 Let's go to 66. I know this isn't part of a block, but boy, there's such a great tie in here. Let's just read a few verses if we could. So if you look at the section heading, this is important, the place and the date. So they're not in Kirtland, Ohio they're in Hiram, Ohio. This is at the John Johnson Farm, remember they go there for a time. This is eventually where Section 76 is going to be received, that great revelation on the three degrees of glory. So they're in Hiram, Ohio and it's October 29th, 1831. It says, "William E. McClellan had petitioned the Lord to make known through the prophet Joseph the answer to five questions, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah."

John Bytheway: 23:48 Okay, of section 66?

Dr. C. Robert L...: 23:50 Of 66, yeah.

John Bytheway: 23:51 "Behold, thus saith the Lord unto my servant William E. McLellin, 'Blessed are you, in as much as you have turned away from your iniquities, and have received my truths.' Saith the Lord your Redeemer, the Savior of the world, even of as many as believe on my name."

Dr. C. Robert L...: 24:07 Just a little bit of background here, if I could real quick, John. So William E. McLellin, he was baptized in the summer of 1831. So he's only been a member for just a few months. And so, "Hey, blessed are you, you've turned away from your iniquities, you've received my truths." Okay, verse three.

John Bytheway: 24:25 "Verily I say unto you, my servant William, that you are clean, but not all. Repent therefore of those things which are not pleasing in my sight, saith the Lord, for the Lord will show them unto you."

Dr. C. Robert L...: 24:37 Any thoughts about that? I thought often thought that is an interesting phrase. "Hey, you've turned away from your inequities, you received my truth, repent of those things that are not pleasing and I'm going to show them to you." But if you go down to verse 10, the Lord not only shows him, he shows the whole world.

Hank Smith: 25:00 [crosstalk 00:22:05] like that published.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 25:00 Oh man, ouch. "Seek not to be cumbered. Forsake all, commit not adultery, a temptation with which thou hast been troubled." Now, I mentioned that because it's going to be part of the context of what I'm going to do here in just a second. But I've often thought it's interesting the Lord doesn't say, quit committing the adultery you are currently committing, he doesn't say that. He just says, this is a temptation. And a lot of us, there's sometimes you and I have sins or misdeeds, but maybe we don't but we're troubled with them. Does that make sense? But are there any thoughts from either of you before we do verse four and five? You're clean but not all, repent of those things which are not pleasing. I've thought that's interesting.

Hank Smith: 25:44 Well, reminds me, the scariest question for me is the man in the New Testament who says to the Lord, "What lack I yet?" That is-

John Bytheway: 23:53 Right, exactly what I was thinking. I'm like, "Are you kidding? Did you really just ask that question? I am totally stumped, I can't think of a thing."

Hank Smith: 28:04 The Lord has one thing to say. I think if I were to say, "Lord, what lack I yet?" He'd say, "How much time do you have, do you want alphabetical or chronological? We've got volumes up here." So I think it's a scary question to say, Lord, show me my weaknesses, show me my sins because he will.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 29:27 John, isn't it interesting that the Lord does not say in that scripture neither, if men come unto me, I will immediately make life hunky dory for them and pour out so many blessings it'll make your head spin, it doesn't that, does it? The way I read that is, heavenly father's crisis, come unto me. And then we're like, yeah, okay, it's almost, if I can just ad-lib, it's like, okay, if you really want to come unto me, things might get a little worse before they get better.

John Bytheway: 24:07 I love to tell pre-missionaries that my sister-in-law told me before I left, my sister-in-law Linda served a mission in England, and she told me a mission will show you your weaknesses. And boy, did I find that to be true. I thought, "Oh, you probably feel really great and spiritual when you're on a mission." And then you go out and you discover, you start seeing your own weakness. I really appreciated that advice and I like to share that with others going on missions because it's not to be surprised that you'll learn, oh, I've got some work to do, don't I?

Dr. C. Robert L...: 24:46 If I could tell you guys a little story, I know you both have published books. And not to talk about name recognition, but you guys have been very successful. I've had five books that I've

published, lesser books, they've been pretty well-received. But I remember the very first time I... I've been in church education for 29 years and there's this thing they have in church education called CES peer review. And if you do a book, you can actually have people in church correlation review it. When I did one of my first books, I was so scared and offended about that and I asked them I said, "Do I have to have them review that?" And this guy I think he could see my concern and he goes, "Oh no, it's just an optional thing." And then he said, "Why would you not want them to?" I was like, "Because I..." I didn't say this but inside I'm like, "Because it's my stuff and I don't want to have them tell me what." It came from a very prideful place.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 25:47

Well, now 15 years later, having done five books that have been pretty successful, and again, it's not about my books or writings, whenever I write a book, I can't wait to send it to CES peer review, to have professionals and people who know the doctrine to have another set of eyes, to be able to say, "Let me show you some weaknesses in this. Let me show you some things." I love that and I don't take offense to it anymore because what it's doing, it's improving the quality of this work that I'm doing. And why in the world would I not want someone to show me my weakness? But as humans, I guess there's this tendency, there's a fear to say someone's attacking me. You look at this culture, we live in now this shame people. I hear this the time from kids, "Oh, people are shaming me." Well are people shaming you? Is the church shaming you? Or are people trying to help you? Is heavenly father trying to help you become a better person?

Hank Smith: 29:48

I've noticed two things. One, parenting, John, like a mission has given me front row seats to my own immaturity, it's given my wife orchestra seats to my immaturity. And two, I've noticed the more I become aware of my own weaknesses and mistakes, the more gentle I am with other people's weaknesses and mistakes. I just have a tendency to, what did Joseph Smith say? The nearer we get to our heavenly father, the more we are inclined to look upon perishing souls with compassion. We want to take their sins, throw them behind us, and carry these people on our shoulders. I think that as you get closer and closer to the spirit, you become more gentle. And you can see the Lord being gentle here, direct but also gentle. You are clean, not all, repent therefore. I'll help you along.

John Bytheway: 30:49

That doctrine of reciprocity, if you extend mercy, you receive mercy. And I love that idea that, Hank, is the more you confront your own weakness, the more you're, "We're all just doing the best we can." You take that attitude. I look back at these folks in early church history, one of the things that's been so helpful to

me about this whole experience of doing this podcast is just to keep reminding us, look, these guys have been only members of the church for a year and a half. They're still figuring this out as they go, and let's cut them some slack for crying out loud, they don't have what we have. That helps me to do what Joseph Smith said, I'm more disposed to look with compassion on them. Hey there, they were trying to figure this out too, and look at the sacrifices they were making. They were doing great as far as I can see.

- Dr. C. Robert L...: [31:45](#) Isn't it stunning to think that four of the original members of the quorum of the 12 were aged 24? 24. The oldest member, if I remember correctly, was David W. Patton. Well, Thomas B. Marsh was 35, but Brigham and David W. Patton were only 33, and those were the senior members of the quorum, that's amazing.
- Hank Smith: [32:13](#) I'm already past the age that Joseph Smith lived and I haven't grasped the lessons of life yet, wow. I liked the lesson you friend Rob McClain Hayward, he taught us a couple of weeks ago. He said, "You can be like Edward Partridge and get in a big fight with Joseph Smith and then reconcile and do your best and repent and come back. Or you can be like Ezra Booth and stay offended. You can stay offended forever."
- John Bytheway: [32:49](#) Simon's right, all right.
- Hank Smith: [32:51](#) Just stay offended and let that take over your heart. That to me was an important lesson. I try to be more like Edward Partridge and reconcile and say, well, I'm going to start over and do my best, try again. I'm going to try again.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: [33:11](#) Let's go on now. Hank, verse four and five, let's hear those.
- Hank Smith: [33:15](#) We're still back in 66, right?
- Dr. C. Robert L...: [33:16](#) Still in 66, yeah.
- Hank Smith: [33:18](#) "Now, verily, I, the Lord will show unto you what I will concerning you or what is my will concerning you. Behold, verily I say unto you that it is my will that you should proclaim my gospel from land to land, from city to city, yea, in those regions round about where it has not been proclaimed."
- Dr. C. Robert L...: [33:36](#) Verse six say, "Tarry not many days in this place." Meaning Ohio specifically Hiram. "Go not up unto the land of Zion as yet." That's referenced to Independence, Missouri. "But in as much as

you can send, send otherwise think not of thy property." And then here comes William E. McLellin's first mission call, "Go ye unto the eastern lands." And when it says eastern lands, we're not talking about East Asia or the Middle east. We haven't extended that far yet, we still aren't in some of those lands today. But this would be the East Coast of the United States. "Bear testimony in every place." Verse eight, "Let my servant Samuel H. Smith," this is the prophets brother "go with you." Now, that's where we stop. And remember verse 10, if we look at that, "Seek not to be cumbered, forsake all. Commit not adultery, a temptation with which thou hast been troubled."

- Dr. C. Robert L...: 34:40 Now, real fast what I'd like to do is this, there's a really cool principle that I just love. And this is all going to tie back to '67 and William E. McClellan in that episode, if you look at section 66, this is October 29th, 1831. So this is when he gets his mission call to go with Samuel H. Smith to the Eastern lands, Eastern United States and to preach the gospel.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 35:04 Now, we're going to skip all the way over to section 75. Sometimes, I can't remember, I think it was Elder Richard G Scott, said, "Sometimes you find a principle that's just in a verse of scripture, sometimes you find a principle that's an entire chapter, sometimes you have to span across chapters and sections to find principles." Does that make sense?
- Hank Smith: 35:34 Sure.
- Dr. C. Robert L...: 35:34 So let's look at the section 75, the date first Revelation given to Joseph Smith at Amherst, Ohio, January 25th, 1832. So this is about two, three months later. Now, in the interim, Samuel Smith and William E. McClellan, they went on a mission and we actually know they not only started but they actually had to turn back and go back to Kirtland. All that Samuel H. Smith says in his journal is, he says, "Our way was hedged up because of some things relating to William E. McClellan, and we had to go back to Kirtland." Now, we don't know what it was and that probably wasn't Samuel Smith's place to say that, bless his heart. So John if you'd read verse six.
- John Bytheway: 36:29 "Therefore, verily I say unto my servant William E. McLellin, I revoke the commission which I gave unto him to go unto the eastern countries."
- Hank Smith: 36:37 So 75:7.
- John Bytheway: 36:38 Seven too?

Hank Smith: 36:41 No, I'm going to take this one.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 36:41 Yeah, Hank's going to do this one.

Hank Smith: 36:45 Don't steal my verse, John. "I give unto him a new commission and a new commandment, in the which I, the Lord, chasten him for the murmurings of his heart."

Dr. C. Robert L...: 37:00 Verse eight. "And he sinned, nevertheless, I forgive him and say unto him again, 'Go ye into the south countries.'" I don't know about you two but the first time I saw 66 and 75, I thought there is so many cool things going on here. First of all, like Samuel H. Smith, the Lord doesn't mention what the sin is. He does mention prefacing the sin that he murmured in his heart. But they did have to go back, but watch what it says there, "He sinned, nevertheless, I forgive him and say unto him again, 'Go ye into the South countries.'" John, Hanky, any principles putting that all together, and I know we need to be careful about how we talk about the liberty of grace. Let's talk about grace and the Lord and his character. I think there's... What are some things we can assume from all of this that's going on here?

John Bytheway: 38:00 When when we looked at, I remember just noting this when I was marking 60, 61, and 62, that all three of them had a phrase somewhere, "I, the Lord, forgive sins." And it was so nice to see that. If he's our savior, that means he forgives and he saves us from our sins. I don't know, the sigh of he's forgiving, he's he is forgiving, and I'm so thankful for that.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 38:28 Let me just maybe share some thoughts. We really can repent of sin, that's real, we really can repent. Heavenly Father really does forgive and here's the other cool things, what is the principle when he says, "I given to you a new commission to go into the South countries?" Heavenly Father not only forgives, but he does what?

John Bytheway: 38:52 Let's you try again?

Dr. C. Robert L...: 38:53 He gives second chances, that's right. But John, is he going into the Eastern countries?

John Bytheway: 39:02 No, that was interesting. That didn't go so well, go South this time.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 39:13 Now, this is where I think all of us have been stung by this before. So sorry to play this guess what's on my mind game, I do this with my institute and BYU students. So we can repent,

Heavenly Father really does forgive, he gives second chances, but what?

Hank Smith: 39:26

You can miss opportunities because of mistakes.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 39:30

I think there is a powerful lesson here. We can repent, God does forgive, he gives second chances, but opportunities can be lost forever. Let me just mention a few examples and John and Hank, maybe you know of some. This was Elder Ballard in October conference, 2002. Remember the raise the bar and missionary work talk? He said this, he said, "Please understand this, the bar that is the standard for missionary service is being raised. The day of the repenting go missionary is over. You know what I'm talking about, you don't, you eat my young brothers." And parenthetically, if you remember, Elder Ballard took some heat for this from certain places, certain individuals in the church. He said, "Some young men have the mistaken idea that they can be involved in simple behavior and then repent when they're 18.5 so they can go on their mission at 19." He says, "And then here's the principle. While it is true that you can repent of sin, you may or may not qualify to serve."

Dr. C. Robert L...: 40:40

Now, some might think that contradicts this principle that we're setting up, but I don't think it does. Can that young man repent? Absolutely. Will God forgive? Absolutely. Does he give second chances? Sure. He could still go on a mission maybe later in life with his wife, become exalted in the temple. Someone who struggles with the word of wisdom, smoked six packs a day for 40 years, can they repent? Absolutely. Does God forgive and love them? Sure. Can they be exalted one day? Absolutely. But what? They might need to deal with the lung element for a lot of their lives. I think there is, I don't want to be Debbie Downer, but I think there's a powerful principle here of realizing that repentance is real, forgiveness is real, God gives second chances, but there can be times when opportunities are lost.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 41:32

I've sat in disciplinary councils before as the Bishop and I've had to explain this principle. That God does forgive and you can go on, but there might be some things you miss out on. I've had to tell some young men who were prevented from going on and serving a mission that maybe you'll get to serve someday, and God loves you. And there's no need you need to beat yourself up.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 42:00

I want to tell you a story real quick. I was serving as an institute director at an institute out in the mid-Midwest about 15 years ago. I had a young man, he had to come home early from a mission. John and Hank, and I know there is a stigma and a

culture sometimes associated with missionaries that come home early, and it is not right. It's very judgmental and very harsh. But that culture exists. He took several of my institute classes and he looked like Johnny Raincloud walking around the institute for a whole year. I can't tell you how many times he was in my office telling me, "Brother Line, these people, they judge me. And girls won't date me and all this stuff." It was really, really hard. And something happened after about a year. He kept taking my classes, really faithful young man, had just done something which wasn't right. Got himself under predicament, had to come home, repented fully.

Dr. C. Robert L...:

43:11

One day I noticed that there was this smile that had returned to his face. And he started walking around the institute and he was just so happy and filled with joy. Finally one day I grabbed him and I called by my name and I said, "Hey, get in here, come into my office." He said, "What's up?" I said, "Sit down." And I go, "What's going on with you?" He goes, "What do you mean what's going on with me?" I said, "You look so happy." And he started to cry and he said, "Brother Line, I finally decided to own it. I finally decided to own it. And I had to admit to myself, I did those things, I did those things, but not anymore, not anymore." Within about a month he was dating this beautiful girl, part of our institute, got married in the temple and went on with this life.

Dr. C. Robert L...:

44:12

Again, sorry to get emotional, but there's such a powerful principle. If I could end with this quote. And then John and Hank, I'd love to hear your response to this principle. Elder Richard G. Scott said, "If you have repented from serious transgression and mistakenly believe that you will always be a second class citizen in the Kingdom of God, learn that that is not true. Find encouragement in the lives of Alma the younger in the sons of Mosiah. They were tragically wicked yet their full repentance and service qualified them to be considered as noble as righteous Captain Merona." Isn't that amazing? One of the things I love about this gospel is the grace, the love, the mercy of the Lord. Yeah, there's justice, but there's also mercy. I know some would say, "Well, mercy can't rob justice." But in Alma 34, it says mercy does overpower justice. And thank goodness we have the Lord Jesus Christ.

John Bytheway:

45:09

I saw on a greeting card in Alaska somewhere I think this little saying that said, "Well, none of us can go back and create a brand new beginning. All of us can start where we are and create a brand new ending." And I liked that idea that if the Lord is telling us to forgive seven times 70, then I think we can suspect he is that forgiving of us as well.

Hank Smith: 45:40 Rob, as you were telling the story, I was thinking about the lion and the witch and the wardrobe, if you remember Edmund, Edmund of the four siblings. Edmund is the one who makes the serious mistakes and hurts his siblings pretty badly, but eventually comes around and comes back to his sibling side, if you remember. And then if you've read the book, they did this in the movie I think pretty well. But he and Aslan go alone, Aslan being the Christ figure, they go alone up onto a mountain side and they have a long series talk about what Edmund has done. You can see in the movie you've got Edmund there with his head down. Then in the book, I don't know if they did this in the movie, but they come walking back into the group.

Hank Smith: 46:30 And Aslan says, basically to the rest of the group, "Your brother is back and there is no need to speak of this again." Basically saying, he and I have worked it out and be grateful he is home and there is no need for you and him to hash this all out again. I loved that moment. Like this is between me and him and Edmund personally apologizes to his siblings and then becomes, like you said, this great. I think CS Lewis had that same idea of the Lord will be merciful and grant repentance and forgiveness. And we can do the same. I think that this is something that we can learn from the Lord how to forgive. Isn't that in the parable of the, and we maybe talked about this in earlier episode, John, the parable of the unforgiving servant, where the Lord gives him of this big debt and-

John Bytheway: 47:41 A 10,000 talent debt.

Hank Smith: 47:42 Yeah. He won't forgive someone else, and the Lord says, "Didn't I forgive you just because you asked me to?" Anyway, that was my thought. It's the one I thought, one of the most beautiful parts of the lion, the witch, and the wardrobe, is the forgiveness of Edmund and the Lord telling the other group, there is no need to speak of this again.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 48:04 Well, and Hank, I think of a quote that you paraphrased. Actually I can't remember who, you or John, but from Joseph Smith, of casting people's sins behind our backs. I've often thought, based on that quote, that one of the great, I think, litmus tests of where we are as disciples of Christ is not how righteous we think we are but how we respond to others who are not necessarily righteous. In other words, how do we treat people who are... Am I repulsed by people who are in sin? Joseph Smith, what did he say? He says, "No, the more converted you are, the more you want to help and show-"

John Bytheway: 49:04 Compassion.

Dr. C. Robert L...:	<u>49:04</u>	Yeah. So if I'm repulsed by people who are in sin, that probably is much more telling of where I am as a discipled than what that person is, if that makes sense. The closer I am to God, the more... And here's the greatest example of hanging out with sinners and showing compassion to sinners, you cannot read the New Testament and miss that message, if you do, you've been asleep.
Hank Smith:	<u>49:26</u>	I don't know about both of you, but I have learned by sad experience that a very quick way to lose the spirit is to attack a sinner, attack someone you believe to be in sin, go after them. It's a quick way for the Lord to go, "Ooh, that is not of me."
John Bytheway:	<u>49:44</u>	I'm just thinking about the idea of owning it because I feel like Alma 36 is Alma owning it. And then saying, "I could remember my pains no more." I put this on a multiple choice tests, did he say he could remember his sins no more? No, he remembered them, he's telling us about them. But he said, but it didn't hurt anymore. I was held up by the memory of my sins no more. And I love that idea that he owned it but then when he came to Christ, all of a sudden his joy was as exquisite as was his pain. I love it because at first he says, "The thought of coming to the presence of God did rock my soul with inexpressible horror." And then on the other side of the page, "Me thought I saw as our father, Lehi, saw God sitting upon his throne, and my soul but longed to be there." It went from such opposites. And he remembered his sins, but it didn't hurt anymore.
Hank Smith:	<u>50:46</u>	Sorry, John, I was going to say the whole turning point of that verse, the whole chapter, there's a turning point where he says-
John Bytheway:	<u>50:52</u>	"My father taught me."
Hank Smith:	<u>51:00</u>	"My father taught me about Jesus Christ."
John Bytheway:	<u>51:03</u>	"Jesus Christ the son of God who could forgive sins, and I cried within my heart." It's somewhere back there when dad didn't think I was listening, I was actually listening. And I remembered enough to say, "Have mercy on me." What a great chapter.
Hank Smith:	<u>51:11</u>	And that brings us back to what you said earlier, John, when you said, "His imperfections you have known, you have seen. Where are your eyes? Are your eyes on other people and their imperfections or your eyes are on Christ?" This is the turning point.
John Bytheway:	<u>51:27</u>	Look at the father of lights instead.

Dr. C. Robert L...: 51:30 Isn't it interesting that in Section 66 God tells William E. McClellan, "Hey, you're clean, but not all. I'll show you your imperfections." And the very next section, what's William E. McClellan trying to do with a group of people? Pointing out Joseph's imperfections. It's almost comical. It goes back to the unmerciful servant parable. It's like, "William, do you not recognize the mercy I'm trying to extend and the second chances I'm trying to give you and yet you're going to be critical of another member?" Anyhow, kind of interesting.

John Bytheway: 52:52 Please join us for part two of this podcast.