

EPISODE 30 • PART I



Dr. Matthew C. Godfrey

D&C 81-83

- Hank Smith: 00:01 Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their *Come Follow, Me Study*. I'm Hank Smith.
- John Bytheway: 00:09 And I'm John Bytheway.
- Hank Smith: 00:11 We love to learn.
- John Bytheway: 00:11 We love to laugh.
- Hank Smith: 00:13 We want to learn and laugh with you-
- John Bytheway: 00:15 As together, we followHIM.
- Hank Smith: 00:20 Hello everyone. Welcome to today's episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I am your host. I'm here with my refreshing cohost, the master teacher John Bytheway. Welcome John.
- John Bytheway: 00:35 Hank, we got a comment. Why is Hank always talking up John Bytheway?
- Hank Smith: 00:40 He is amazing.
- John Bytheway: 00:41 Stop. Stop. Stop.
- Hank Smith: 00:42 John, people have asked me. They said, "Is he the same in person as he seems?" I'm like, "He's better in person." Oh, hey, I just want to make sure everybody knows that you can find us on social media, on Instagram and Facebook. You can rate and review the podcast. We'd love you to do that. Also, you can go to followHIM.co, followHIM.co, and you can get transcripts and show notes and all you need there. We hope you'll join us. Now, John, I've been looking forward to today for a long time. I've looked up to our guest work and his resume for a long time. Tell us who we have.
- John Bytheway: 01:25 Yeah. I'm excited for this too. I just think every time we have somebody on, it's so fun to hear the very backgrounds of the people that we get to talk to and such an interesting background

today. I love that it adds to the testimonies that some many people from so many different backgrounds are our brothers and sisters. I just love this. Today, we were talking with Matthew Godfrey. He's the General Editor and the Managing Historian of the Joseph Smith Papers Project. Now, that right there is just huge. Previously, he said I worked for eight years as a historical consultant with a company, Historical Research Associates. Head of the company's History Division from 2006 to 2010 and President of the company from 2008 to 2010. He has a PhD in American and Public History from Washington State University. He's the author of, listen to this book, Hank, *Religion, Politics and Sugar*, subtitled *The Mormon Church, The Federal Government and the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1907 to 1921*, and a co editor of the *Earth Will Appear as the Garden of Eden: Essays in Mormon Environmental History*.

- John Bytheway: 02:45 He also authored essays published in the *Public Historian*, *Agricultural History*, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, *The Journal of Mormon History*, *BYU Studies Quarterly* and *Mormon Historical Studies*. And Hank, you have a book that we both have. Hold that up and tell us about that book that Matthew's editor of, I think, one of the editors.
- Hank Smith: 03:08 Yeah. Matt, thank you so much for being here, by the way.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 03:12 Oh, you bet. Thank you for having me. I really admire what you guys are doing and I'm just grateful to be here.
- Hank Smith: 03:19 I reached out and I was kind of crossing my fingers saying, "Come on, say yes," and you were so kind, so kind to say yes because we know you're very busy. Now, the book that John was talking about is this book, *Know Brother Joseph*. What's this project been like, Matt?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 03:41 Yes. That book was just published by Deseret Book in March. And myself, Matt Grow and Eric Smith were all General Editors of the Joseph Smith Papers Project and have been for a number of years. We decided that because the Joseph Smith Papers is a project that's really more geared toward scholars than it is towards general Church members, we were thinking of ways of how we can get some of the findings, some of the discoveries that we've made about Joseph Smith to a larger general public? We decided that we would ask numerous scholars, both those working on the Joseph Smith Papers, Professors of Church History and Doctrine from BYU, others that we knew to just write very short essays about what they've learned about Joseph Smith and who he was as a person from the Joseph Smith Papers. We put that together. It was a pleasure to read all

of the essays. They're just so full of insights into Joseph Smith as a person. We're just really, really pleased with it.

- Hank Smith: 04:55 I've been reading a few essays every day and it's uplifting and it's real.. It's just been... This is turning into one of my favorites. This is where I personally like to get my history. I like to get it from historians. Some people might say that, "Well, a historian is not necessarily something that you have to rely on in getting your history." We have plenty of what I would call, and I got this from Dr. Dirkmaat, we have plenty of what he calls pseudo-historians online, pseudo-scholars online. What would you say to someone who says, "No, I get my history online," versus, "I get my history from published historians?"
- Dr. Matthew C.: 05:51 Sure. Yeah. I mean, there are some good things that you can get online, but I think when you're studying Church History, when you're studying any aspect of history really, you know there are people who have been trained to be historians, just like you have people that have trained to be doctors, you have people who have trained to be attorneys. As much as I love my brother, who was in the Church Education System for a number of years, if I was getting sued over something, I would go to my brother who's an attorney and not to my brother who's a Seminary Teacher because my brother who's an attorney has had the background and the training in that. I think the same can be said for historians. When you go through the graduate program history, master's degrees and PhDs in history, you get exposed to what the Historical Method is, how to try to write history objectively, to be aware of biases, both your own biases, the biases in your sources. You're able to better see that there are always two sides to every story. There's not just one side.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 07:06 It's just a way, I think, that historians are able to look at sources, to be able to put those together to make an argument that I definitely think it is more beneficial to really read from those who have had the training.
- John Bytheway: 07:26 Amen. I think that there are, as Matt just alluded to, there's rules of scholarship, there's tools that scholars use, there's going to primary sources. I think as we all become more critical and when we read, we hear facts, then we hear conclusions based on the facts. I'm grateful there are... When I pick up a book like this, *Know Brother Joseph*, that I can trust these scholars to use those tools and rules of scholarship and that makes me go, "Okay, this is a trustworthy source." There's the good, there's the bad. We know these weren't perfect people, but I can trust this and that makes such a difference.

Hank Smith: 08:09 And Matt, you didn't come on here to sell books and I didn't even tell you I was going to do this, but the book is *Know Brother Joseph* and I'm telling anyone who is listening, if you truly want to know who Joseph Smith is, unless you have certain conclusions you want about him, this is who he is. This book is who he is, who he was.

John Bytheway: 08:29 We're so glad to have you, Matt, and thank you for that contribution you've made to the whole Church.

Dr. Matthew C.: 08:36 Well, thank you. I appreciate that and I hope people will get a good depiction of who Joseph was, not just that he was a prophet, but that he was a real human being too, that he went through challenges and difficulties in trying to be a father and trying to be a husband. He's doing all this while he's trying to restore the Church and it's just pretty amazing when you look at it.

John Bytheway: 09:00 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 09:01 Yeah. There was one about the loneliness of Joseph Smith. I can't remember who that one was by, but man, that specific essay and there's I don't know how many essays, there a lot-

John Bytheway: 09:13 And Hank, we should mention, Hank, how many of the people that we've had on the podcast are contributors to this. Stephen Harper and Tony Sweat and Gerrit Dirkmaat.

Hank Smith: 09:23 Denise Johnson, Jenny Reeder. So, so good. Anyway, should we get into our lesson? This week, we're studying Sections 81, 82 and 83. Matt, let's go back as far as you want and help give some context. Let's give the history that our listeners need to know before studying these sections.

Dr. Matthew C.: 09:46 The thing that I think is interesting with these sections, as you were mentioning, it's not like they're very long. They're three relatively short sections in the Doctrine and Covenants, but the historical context for these sections are very important and are very detailed too. There's actually quite a bit to talk about so that people can better understand what's going on in these sections. Two of these sections, especially deal with consecration and with the Saints trying to practice the Law of Consecration, which of course was given to them in February of 1831 in what is Section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The sections also deal with building up the City of Zion. Those two things, the Law of Consecration, building up the City of Zion, how the saints are going to do that, but the Lord also, in Section

57 in the Doctrine and Covenants, has told William W. Phelps that he needs to plant himself in Missouri and be a printer to the Church and he tells Sidney Gilbert that he is both to be an agent of Edward Partridge, so help him buy land, as well as he's supposed to establish a store in Independence.

Dr. Matthew C.: 11:15

With those two things, the printing endeavor that's supposed to be going on in Independence, the store that they're supposed to establish there, the saints start to wonder about, "Okay, how are we going to finance this?" Joseph Smith and some other elders met in November of 1831. They decide they want to print a compilation of Joseph Smith's revelations, which will become known as *The Book of Commandments*, that's to be printed out of Missouri. One they figure out how much money it actually costs to buy enough paper to print 10,000 copies, they decide, "Yeah, let's cut that back a little bit. We're only going to print 3,000 copies." So you have that going on as well, that they're trying to print this compilation of Joseph Smith's revelations.

Dr. Matthew C.: 12:02

So again, the question comes up, how are we going to fund all of this? These three sections also deal with the temporal aspects of the Church. How do you get enough money to be able to do the things that the Lord has told you that he wants you to do? In November of 1831, this is as Joseph Smith and others are talking about what they need to do to publish the revelations, the Lord gives another revelation to Joseph Smith where he appoints six men to be what he calls the "stewards" over the revelations and those six men are Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, William W. Phelps and Martin Harris. They're appointed to be the stewards over the revelations. What this means is that they're the ones that have oversight over the publication over *The Book of Commandments*. They soon become known as the Literary Firm, that's kind of the title that's given to this organization of these six men who are supposed to oversee this publication.

Dr. Matthew C.: 13:12

You have this Literary Firm that's established to do that. But then again, you still have this store in Missouri that they're trying to buy goods for. You have Newel K. Whitney, who is a store owner in Kirtland, and he's called to be a bishop in the Church in December of 1831 and he's told that his store should serve as a storehouse for the Church as well, just like the store that Sidney Gilbert's supposed to build in Independence will be a storehouse so too Newel K. Whitney's store is supposed to be a storehouse. There's these questions of, "Okay, how do we organize this? How do we manage these different temporal ventures that are going on?" In Section 82 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we see the Lord giving instructions about how he

wants these different things to be managed. Now, this begins Section 78, which you've talked about previously. In that section, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and Newel K. Whitney are told to go to Zion and to sit in council with the Saints and to establish a firm while they are there.

Dr. Matthew C.: 14:29

Joseph and Sidney and Newel K. Whitney travel to Missouri in the spring of 1832. They held a council of high priests and elders on April 26th and April 27th of 1832. In that council of elders, Joseph Smith receives what is Section 82 in the Doctrine and Covenants, which tells them that they need to form this firm to manage the mercantile and publishing endeavors of the Church. That's kind of the background for Section 82. One of the things that you need to keep in mind, and this is another theme that comes up with these three sections, is that the background that I just laid out for Section 82, if you read Section 82 as it currently is in the Doctrine and Covenants, you're going to say, "What in the world is he talking about? There's nothing in there about a firm. There's nothing in there about publishing and mercantile endeavors." The reason for that is that when the revelation was first given, the earliest copies that we have of the revelation say that Joseph is supposed to organize this firm to coordinate the publishing and mercantile endeavors.

Dr. Matthew C.: 15:45

But when they prepare the revelation for publication in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, they actually decide that they need to try to provide some protection for the people who are members of this firm so that creditors didn't come after each member of the firm. When it's published, they take out the true purpose of what the firm is. They just say that it's an establishment that will take care of the poor and the needy, which ultimately is what the United Firm was supposed to do, but it's not as specific as the original revelation was. They also change it so that it's not referred to as a firm, but it's referred to as an order. This is where we get people talking about the United Order because of these changes that are made.

Hank Smith: 16:33

So United Firm, United Order, kind of the same thing.

Dr. Matthew C.: 16:37

Same thing, but it is important to note too that when we think of the United Order today, we often think of what Brigham Young instituted in the Great Basin after the Saints moved there and that's not the same as this United Firm that's established in Section 82. The United Firm was an original of nine Church leaders who each had their different stewardships over either the mercantile or publishing endeavors of the church and they were supposed to work together to manage those things.

- Hank Smith: 17:12 And there's some things going on... If Joseph Smith doesn't have enough going on, he's got Ezra Booth to deal with and what's happening there right?
- Dr. Matthew C. ...: 17:25 Yeah. He's got Ezra Booth to deal with. Ezra Booth, I think as you've talked about before, a member of the Church for several months, had been a Methodist minister, converted when he saw Joseph heal Elsa Johnson's arm. He's one of the ones that's commanded to travel to Missouri in the summer of 1831. He's told that in Section 52. He's just kind of a malcontent the whole time that he's traveling. He gets mad because Joseph and Sidney ride part of the way in a carriage, but yet he has to walk and, "Why should I have to walk if they get to ride in a carriage?" He gets to Independence and he looks around and he says, "This is like this rough frontier community. This is where we're supposed to build Zion? This doesn't seem like a place where Zion is going to flourish," so he gets upset about that. When he gets back from Missouri, he decides that Joseph Smith isn't a true prophet, that the Church isn't for him. He leaves and begins publishing a series of letters in *The Ohio Star* that are highly critical of Joseph Smith, that disparage and mock the Church because Ezra's intent is to try to drive people away from the Church.
- Dr. Matthew C. ...: 18:44 These letters are published in *The Ohio Star*. The Lord tells Joseph and Sidney Rigdon in January of 1832 that they need to do some damage control with this. They need to go out and try to refute some of the things that Ezra Booth's saying. You have that going on. You have Joseph and Sidney working on the translation of the bible. They're in Hiram, Ohio at John Johnson's home and they're going through the bible, asking questions, getting revelations based on those questions, making changes based off of inspiration. That leads to great sections in the Doctrine and Covenants, like Section 76 that come because of their work on this. But the funny thing is, we look at what Joseph and Sidney are doing in the Joseph Smith Translation. We look at Section 76 and we think, "Boy, where would we be without this work? Joseph's just pouring out all of this new light and knowledge that the Lord's giving him about the Bible, about the afterlife."
- Dr. Matthew C. ...: 19:51 We look at that and we rejoice in it, but there were some people in Hiram who looked at some of the things that Joseph was revealing, including Section 76, and they thought it was blasphemous. They thought that, "Who was this young kid who's proclaiming that he knows what's going on after this life?" There begins to be some opposition to Joseph that comes about in Hiram. In March of 1832, so just about a little over a month

after Joseph and Sidney see the vision of the Celestial, Terrestrial and Telestial Kingdoms, a mob attacks Joseph and Sidney. As I mentioned, Joseph's staying and the John Johnson home with Emma. He's there with his daughter Julia and his son Joseph. They're twins, so they're both about 11-months-old. Joseph Murdock, the baby, had the measles at the time. He's up at night. Anyone who's had a baby who's sick, you know what nights are like. They're just awful. Emma's been up with the baby. Joseph's been up with the baby.

Dr. Matthew C.: 21:11

In the middle of the night, this mob bursts into the house. They kick the door in. They grab Joseph. They drag him out of the house. They take him to a field. They try to force poison into his mouth. They beat him. They ultimately tar and feather him, which was a way back in this time that was just kind of a way to humiliate someone to try to show people that this person isn't a valued member of society. At the same time, they take Sidney Rigdon out of his home and they drag him to a field as well. As they're dragging him along the ground, his head is hitting rocks. It really does some damage to Sidney and takes him several days to recover from this, as it takes Joseph several days to recover as well. One of the great things about this, if there's anything great that can come out of such a horrific incident, the next morning... Joseph's been up all night. When he goes back to the John Johnson home and Emma sees him, she about faints because she at first thinks that the tar that's on him is blood and that's he just this bloody mess, but then she has to spend the rest of the night trying to take the tar off of him, which is a very painful process.

Dr. Matthew C.: 22:38

She's got this sick baby with measles. She's trying to get Joseph cleaned up. If you want to think about a night from hell, I think that would be a night. But she's able to get Joseph cleaned up and the next morning he goes and he preaches the sermon in the Sunday meetings, which is remarkable in and of itself. I mean, if it was me and I just got beat up and had tar poured over my body, I think I'd be like, "I think the Lord will understand if I take a break this Sunday. I'm not sure I need to go preach," but Joseph felt strongly that he needed to do it. He preached. And according to some accounts, members of the mob were actually in the congregation that he's preaching to. You'd have to think that they are feeling pretty sheepish about that. Knowing what they had done to him and then seeing him still stand up and testify about the truthfulness of the gospel.

Hank Smith: 23:34

Do we know anybody in the group?

Dr. Matthew C.: 23:38 Yeah. Symonds Rider, I believe, was in there. Boy, off the top of my head, I don't know.

Hank Smith: 23:43 Probably not Booth himself. Probably not Booth himself.

Dr. Matthew C.: 23:46 No, Booth wasn't. No, he wasn't living in Hiram at the time. In terms of the skin, as far as we know, when they're taking off the tar and they're trying to scrape it off, it does take skin off at the same time. So I think wherever the tar was on him, his skin would just raw from taking it off. I mean, incredibly painful. It's hard to imagine what that would be like. It affects Joseph for the rest of his life. He says that the attack left him with an issue with his side. He never really specifies what it is. But if you know about the fight that William Smith has with Joseph in 1835 when they get into it as brothers do and William tackles Joseph. Joseph says after that, "This trouble that I've had with my side since the mobbing flared up again because of what you did to me," so it's something that he deals with for a long time.

Dr. Matthew C.: 24:50 In terms of Sidney Rigdon, there are some scholars that believe that he had enough trauma to his head during this attack that it did change his personality a bit. We think that might have been something that was a lingering effect from this attack, but, I mean, he stayed close friends with Joseph for several years after this. It's really not until the 1840s that you see a divide creep up between Joseph and Sidney, but there are historians who believe that it did have a lasting effect on him because of the damage that he sustained in the attack.

Hank Smith: 25:33 I think too, I wanted to ask you, we often refer to taking Joseph Smith out of his home with the Murdock twins right there and everything, but Sidney, did they also break into his cabin and didn't he also have five children in there at the same time?

Dr. Matthew C.: 25:52 Yeah. I don't know how many children he had at that time, but they did break into his home just as they did where Joseph was living. I mean, with Joseph Smith's children, they're babies. They're 11-months-old.

Hank Smith: 26:05 Babies, yeah.

Dr. Matthew C.: 26:07 I doubt that Julia and Murdock remember that attack, but I think Sidney had some older children. You have to think that would be fairly traumatic too to see this happen to your father, but that's the other thing that I didn't touch on either is that because the mob left the door open in the Johnson home after they took Joseph out, then Joseph Murdock's exposed to that cold night

air and it's just a few days after this that he dies. When you think about this, that's a fairly traumatic thing for Joseph and Emma, in part because they had already lost three children and then here you have Joseph Murdock dying as well. That's four out of Joseph's first five children that have died. It's interesting because when Joseph, when he's on his way back from Missouri in 1832, he wrote a letter to Emma and this letter is just so poignant. He talks in there about hearing from Martin Harris that Hyrum Smith's daughter had passed away. She was not quite yet three years old when she died. Joseph talks about this in his letter to Emma and then he says, "I think we can in some way sympathize with him."

- Dr. Matthew C.: 27:29 I think, "What a grand understatement." Of course, they could sympathize because they lost four of their own children by this time. When you're talking about everything that's going on in Joseph's life, it's not just the Bible translation, it's not just trying to build up Zion, it's not just getting these revelations, it's trying to deal with opposition, it's trying to deal with the deaths of his children. All of this is going on in the spring of 1832 when these revelations are given and it's just astounding to me that Joseph can carry on and do something like establish the United Firm, this temporal thing when he has all of this personal turmoil that's going on at the same time.
- Hank Smith: 28:17 And he's young. He's 26-or 27-years-old.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 28:21 Yeah, 26.
- Hank Smith: 28:22 I mean, I can see someone well mature saying, "Oh, we've got to keep going." If I was 27, I'm out.
- John Bytheway: 28:35 Yeah, you're thinking too... Hank, if he was deceiving the people, if that's what was happening, wouldn't you at this point say, "This is not worth it. Forget it. Nevermind."
- Hank Smith: 28:46 Hell, it's a testimony to what he believed. I don't want to say this wrong, it's amazing to me that the Lord is like, "Yah, we gotta keep going. Here we go. We gotta keep going." Anyway. It makes me appreciate these sections so much more when you just realize the, like you said, the turmoil, the anguish going behind this. I don't think anyone, I just think it's very difficult to fathom burying a child. When I hear about someone who has, it's an experience that they've described to me as a pain that they never knew existed. And to have buried four of five children by this time in your life, I can't... My mind can't comprehend it.

- Dr. Matthew C. ...: 29:49 If you read Hyrum Smith's journal entry about the death of his daughter, it'll break your heart because he essentially says in there, "Mary expired in my arms. Such a day I've never before experienced." You can just feel the pain that this hurts. It didn't matter how many children died, each one was so painful for them. I have to say in this too, it's important to remember that Emma's going through all of this at the same time as Joseph is and what strength she must have had because a week after this mobbing happens, Joseph and Sidney and Newel K. Whitney leave for Missouri. You know that Emma's still grieving the death of her child. She's probably still traumatized from what happened in the home. And yet, she has enough faith to tell Joseph, "Okay, the Lord wants you to go to Missouri, so you need to go to Missouri." Just such great admiration for Emma as well who's enduring all of this too.
- Hank Smith: 30:55 Absolutely.
- John Bytheway: 30:56 I think that it's nice to point out Section 81, Hiram, Ohio, Section 82, Jackson County, Missouri. That's part of this back story that you've just mentioned when he had to go.
- Hank Smith: 31:07 And when he goes, this isn't... Sometimes I'll leave for the weekend or I'll have somewhere to go speak and I hate leaving for a few days. I just hate leaving the family. This is not a few days. If you are going to Missouri, you're going to be gone, what, six to eight weeks.
- Dr. Matthew C. ...: 31:29 Yeah. He was gone about two and a half months and part of that is... We can talk about this too when we get to it, but part of that is as they're coming home from Missouri, there's an accident that happens with the stagecoach that they're riding in and Newel K. Whitney ends up breaking his leg in several places and he can't travel. Joseph sends Sidney Rigdon back to Ohio, but then Joseph stays with Newel K. Whitney in this little town, Greenville, Indiana, for about six weeks until Newel's leg is well enough so that he can travel. I think about that because you know Joseph's anxious to get back home to Emma. He says as much in this letter that I was talking about that he writes to Emma. He talks about how much he misses her, how much he misses Julia, his daughter. And yet, he's a loyal enough friend that he's not just going to leave Newel K. Whitney by himself to recover, he's going to stay with Newel even though it's a great inconvenience to him to do so. I think that speaks a lot about Joseph's character as well.
- Hank Smith: 32:42 This book that we were talking about earlier, *Know Brother Joseph*, that's part of the title, Perspectives on Joseph Smith's

Life and Character. I think you just showed us a piece, another piece of thousands that there are of who the man was. This is an incredible person. John, I would like to stay with you, brother. I'd probably hire out a live-in nurse for you and I'd say, "John, look, I got this nice... I'm going home."

- John Bytheway: 33:21 Hey, I might not expect you to, but at least you could call. I mean, I don't know what the post office was like back then, but how could Joseph communicate with Emma and even let her know that, "I got to stay with Newel. His leg is broken?" I mean, all those things make everything take longer and be more difficult.
- Hank Smith: 33:42 Yeah.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 33:43 Yep.
- John Bytheway: 33:44 But thanks Hank, I appreciate that. If I break my leg, I'll call you.
- Hank Smith: 33:47 Yeah, don't ask me.
- John Bytheway: 33:50 I'll text you.
- Hank Smith: 33:52 Well, this is great to get some background. It's really helpful. Let's take a look at some of the verses of Section 81, Matt, and what would you like us to see here?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 34:05 Well, I think the first thing that is important with this section is the section heading says the revelation as it stands in our Doctrine and Covenants today. It says that it's to Frederick G. Williams, but when the revelation was first given, it was actually to a man named Jesse Gause, who is probably not familiar to most Latter-day Saints, I don't think. I think it's important to know a little bit about who Jesse was and why this revelation was given. Jesse was a relatively recent convert and I say relatively because at this point in 1832, basically anyone's a new convert to the Church.
- Hank Smith: 34:53 Everybody's the new convert.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 34:55 But he had been baptized probably towards the end of 1831 or the first of 1832. He had been involved with several different religious traditions up to this point. He had been a member of the Society of Friends, what we would call the Quakers, for a period of time. He had family who were members of the Shaker religion. Jesse had actually joined the Shakers as well in Ohio, but he joined the Church, again like I said, late 1831, early 1832.

We don't really know a whole lot about his relationship with Joseph Smith, but evidently Joseph considered Jesse to be a rising star. There was something about Jesse that appealed to Joseph. In March of 1832, Joseph called Jesse, as well as Sidney Rigdon, to be counselors to him. When they're established as counselors, this forms what is called at the time the Presidency of the High Priesthood, which is kind of the forerunner to what we would call the First Presidency today.

Dr. Matthew C. ...: 36:14

This Presidency of the High Priesthood comes about. If you're thinking about the organization of the Church, you know that Joseph Smith was appointed to be the First Elder of the Church. Oliver Cowdery was appointed to be the Second Elder when the Church was organized. There were other individuals that were appointed to various priesthood offices, elder, priest, teacher, deacon. In November of 1831, Joseph got a revelation and this revelation is part of what is Section 107 today. In this revelation, he's told by the Lord that he needs to establish a president over the different priesthood offices. The Lord says in this revelation that there needs to be a president over the high priesthood as well or over the high priest, but this isn't just any president calling as we would think of a president of a quorum today because the revelation also says that the president of the High Priesthood would be a prophet, a seer, a revelator, would be like unto Moses. You can tell that this is a pretty substantial thing.

Dr. Matthew C. ...: 37:30

In January of 1832 at a conference that's held of the Church in Amherst, Ohio, Joseph was appointed to be the President of the High Priesthood to have this calling. Then just a few weeks later, he appoints Jesse Gause and Sidney Rigdon to be his counselors to him. Jesse is one of Joseph's counselors and this revelation comes in March of 1832 at a time when Jesse's also serving as a scribe for Joseph. He's helping out a little bit we think with the translation of the bible endeavor, so he's been helping Joseph out and then he receives this revelation, Section 81, that kind of talks about what the duties of a counselor are. Now, the reason why our version of the revelation today doesn't have Jesse's name in there is because we don't know everything that happened with Jesse. We know that he went with Joseph Smith to Missouri on this trip that we've been talking about in the spring of 1832. We know he went on a mission with Zebedee Coltrin in August of 1832. The very next time that he appears in the historical record is in Joseph Smith's journal for December of 1832 where he says that Brother Jesse was excommunicated.

Dr. Matthew C. ...: 38:56

We don't know what happened. There's nothing that says what Jesse did. We don't know if maybe he just fell away. Maybe he went back to the Shakers. We just don't have any good

information about that. But because he's excommunicated, this leaves Joseph without a counselor. In January of 1833, Frederick G. Williams was appointed to be a counselor to Joseph. Before Section 81 is published in the 1835 edition of Doctrine and Covenants, Oliver Cowdery goes through and he crosses out Jesse's name and he writes Frederick G. Williams' name above it. When the revelation is published, it's published as a revelation to Frederick G. Williams. I think this may indicate that Joseph and Oliver and other Church leaders saw this revelation not as something specific to Jesse, but more about what it means to be a counselor to Joseph Smith. They felt comfortable putting Frederick's name in there because of that.

- Hank Smith: 40:01 Hey, he just disappeared. Jesse Gause.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 40:04 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 40:05 Frederick G. Williams, he was one of the early converts of the four original missionaries that came through from New York to Kirtland.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 40:16 Yeah. Oliver Cowdery is appointed to lead the mission to the Lamanites and so he and Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, Peter Whitmer, Jr. come to Kirtland. And yeah, Frederick G. Williams was one of these early individuals that converted. After he's baptized, he says, "Hey, I want to join you guys." He actually goes with Oliver and the others to the unorganized territory beyond Missouri's western border where they preach to a few Indian groups and then he's with them when they come back into Missouri as well.
- Hank Smith: 40:51 He's a go-getter, right? "Yeah, I want to go with you. I want to go out there." We're ready to go. I feel bad for Jesse. I wonder what will happen to him. Any record of him dying somewhere, him--
- Dr. Matthew C.: 41:03 Yeah, we do have a record about that. Jesse, he lives for a few more years after this. He died around September of 1836. At the time he dies, he's living in Chester County, Pennsylvania, which actually is a location where the Church had a branch. The Brandywine Branch was in Chester County. I don't know if Jesse knew any of the Church members living there at the time. He really does kind of disappear from the historical record. We don't know a whole lot about him, what happened to him, but he did live until about 1836. Well, let me say a little bit too about Frederick G. Williams. We've talked a little bit about him, about his conversion, how he became Oliver Cowdery. He was a Thomsonian physician at the time, so he practiced medicine according to the Thomsonian Method, which was like using a lot

of herbal medications, those types of things. He had been ordained a high priest in October of 1831. And for much of 1832, he worked as a scribe for Joseph Smith.

- Dr. Matthew C.: [42:15](#) If you're familiar at all with Joseph's 1832 History, the first account that we have from Joseph of the First Vision, when that's copied into a record book, much of it is in Joseph's hand and the rest of it is in Frederick G. Williams' hand, so he's working as a scribe for Joseph for much of 1832 before he's appointed to be a counselor to Joseph.
- Hank Smith: [42:38](#) I remember Dr. Harper tells us that was his personal favorite of the accounts of the First Vision, though it's not the most... What would you say? Literary . . . flowing. He said it's kind of raw, so Frederick G. Williams had a part in that I guess.
- Dr. Matthew C.: [43:02](#) He did. Yeah. I would agree with Steve on that. The 1832 history, I love it in part because it's such a personal account of what that vision meant to Joseph personally, not just in terms of ushering in the restoration, but in terms of, "I was forgiven of my sins. I realized that Jesus Christ's Atonement is real." I love it for that too.
- Hank Smith: [43:28](#) So we're saying having more than one account is wonderful, aren't we?
- Dr. Matthew C.: [43:33](#) It's great to have more than one account.
- Hank Smith: [43:35](#) Yes. It's not a proverb.
- Dr. Matthew C.: [43:38](#) No, you get just such a more well rounded picture of what the First Vision was, what it meant to Joseph Smith, what led him into the Grove in the first place. I'm actually really happy that we have four accounts from Joseph. I wish we had more from him as well. One thing that I think is interesting in this section, in Section 81, is verse two where it's talking about Joseph Smith. It says, "Unto whom I have given the keys of the kingdom which belong always under the Presidency of the High Priesthood." I think it's interesting because when you read that and it reads Presidency of the High Priesthood, I think we tend to think, "Oh, that means that the keys belong to the First Presidency," but I think what the Lord is saying, I think he's using presidency here to refer more to the office of the President of the High Priesthood. You might say Joe Biden was elected to the Presidency of the United States and I think they're using the term presidency here in that same way. It's saying the keys of the priesthood belong to the President of the Church, which is

kind of how we... That's how we understand it today, that the president, the prophet, holds all of the keys and then can delegate those keys to others. I think that's an important point.

Hank Smith: 45:03

I wonder if, Matt, that comes into play when Sidney thinks he's the one to take over in 1844 if he's thinking it was us, it was the group of us that received these keys when you're saying, "No, this is Joseph," which I think you're right on there. I mean, he mentions Joseph by name at the end of verse one, "Unto whom I have given the keys of the kingdom which belong always unto the presidency," the office of president of the church, but I wonder if Sidney was kind of using that claim.

Dr. Matthew C. ...: 45:36

I think certainly he was and it does get a little bit muddier because in 1833, there's another revelation that's given in March where it says that Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams are equal in holding the keys of the kingdom to Joseph, but I don't think that necessarily means that they could operate separate from Joseph. I think that's saying that because they are members of the Presidency of the High Priesthood, of the First Presidency, then when they operate with the president, with the prophet, then they're all kind of holding those keys, but I don't think it means that Sidney could go do whatever he wanted to with the Church, that Frederick could go do whatever he wanted. The keys still reside in the prophet. I also really like verse three and four because I think this teaches us a lot about callings and about the blessings we can receive from callings and about the blessings that other people can receive when we do our callings. Because essentially, he's telling Frederick G. Williams and Jesse Gause here in this verse, he's saying, "This is what you're appointed to do. I want you to pray vocally in public, in private. I want you to proclaim the gospel."

Dr. Matthew C. ...: 46:54

In verse four, it says, "And in doing these things, that will do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings and will promote the glory of Him who is your Lord." I think for me as I've looked at callings that I've had in the church, when I've fulfilled those in a way that I think is pleasing to the Lord... It's funny because right now I'm serving in a bishopric of YSA wards and I'll be perfectly honest, I'm an introverted person. I'm definitely not an extrovert. It's hard for me at times to get to know people. A lot of people who serve in YSA wards and YSA stakes are not introverts, they're extroverts and that's one reason I think why they're there is because they can interact with the youth. Just to be honest, I've had a tough time over the last few months being in this calling where I think, "Am I good enough to do this? Am I adequate enough? Am I really serving the YSAs in the way that I could be?" I've talked about that with my wife a lot and she just

says, "Just be who you are. You can't be anyone else. The Lord knows your personality. He knows what you're like. And yet, he still wanted you in this calling, so there's someone who's life you can bless in this calling and maybe it's only a few people."

Dr. Matthew C.: 48:31

But I think for me, that's kind of been an eye opener, that kind of what President Monson has said before that the Lord... "Whom the Lord calleth, the Lord qualifies." We may get called to things that are hard for us and we don't feel very good at them, but if we do our best, we will bless the lives of others. We may not even see that. It may not be something that we're ever aware of, but here the Lord tells us it will be for the greatest good and I firmly believe that.

Hank Smith: 49:02

Yeah. I remember one time I was... I'm an extrovert and I was called to be the Financial Clerk to the bishopric. I mean, you don't do a lot of talking to people. I mean, it was mostly... And this was back in the day before you could pay your tithing and your fast offerings online, so it was a lot of sitting there by myself or with another clerk or a member of the bishopric and just counting and enveloping and things. I thought, "I want to teach. Let me be out there with people," but I learned so much. I learned about church administration. I got to become closer with the bishop who really was... It was really neat the things he taught me. So yeah, I think you're right there. I stood in the office which I had been appointed.

Dr. Matthew C.: 49:57

I like just the phrase the greatest good there because I think that there's a lot of things that we could do which are good, but there are so many other... What's the greatest good and I think that's a question a lot of early sections of the Doctrine and Covenants were. Remember all the Whitmer brothers, "What should I do, Joseph?" What did he tell them? "Go proclaim the gospel," and I see that in verse three and that is the greatest good, "Go cry repentance, that's the greatest good that you can do," so it's a good question that all of us want to know. What will have the most impact? What will do the most good? To take the Lord's direction on that and to believe him is the part where even if you're feeling like, "Why am I in this calling? Well, because this is what I was called to do. For now, this is what the Lord wants me to... this is the greatest good." I like that.

Hank Smith: 50:46

Yeah. I personally have always loved verse five, "Stand in the office which I have appointed unto you. In every calling we can do these three things. Succor the weak, whether the financial clerk or the YSA bishop... in the YSA bishopric or, I don't know. You're in the high council, I think, John. All of us, whatever calling we're in, can do these three things. Succor the weak, lift

up the hands which hang down and strengthen the feeble knees. We could be looking for people in our ward, in our branch who are just needing a lift, needing help. I don't know. In every calling of the Church, we can be doing-

- Dr. Matthew C.: [51:34](#) Yeah. It sounds like ministering there. All of us are called to minister to each other. It reminds me of the baptismal covenant in Mosiah 18 that Alma the Elder gives... "Mourn with those that mourn, comfort those who stand in need of comfort." It's kind of focused on . . . others focused, which I like.
- John Bytheway: [51:57](#) Yeah. When I read that and I hear, "Lift up the hands which hang down and strengthen the feeble knees," it brings in my mind an image of someone who's just run a marathon and maybe someone who's not well suited to run a marathon. And as they're going across the finish line, they just look like they're going to collapse from what they've done. I just think spiritually in our day-to-day, there's so many people that I think are spiritually in a way where they're about ready to collapse. If we can just lift them up, if we can help strengthen them, if we can just provide a smile or a hello or how are you doing or a text that lets them know that we're thinking about them, I think how much strength can we give someone who really needs that uplift and who really is struggling spiritually because I think a lot of us are... There's just something. I don't know if it's COVID. I don't know if it's just the days that we're living in, the contention, the polarization of society, but I feel like a lot of people are spiritually struggling and we really need to take that verse to heart I think.
- Hank Smith: [53:18](#) I would add, you can use your social media account to uplift and strengthen people. There's just so many ways we can do it. I think it was Dr. Heward, John, who said, "Come on, these missionaries walked 800 miles to Missouri. We can walk 800 feet over to our neighbors and check in on them." He's like, "We can do it. I know we can."
- John Bytheway: [53:44](#) Yeah.
- Hank Smith: [53:46](#) And it's interesting that these phrases here, when people are really touched by, it's usually this kind of this way, touched by, "Somebody remembered me. Somebody served me." It wasn't, "So and so shared this really cool scripture in a talk." And I love that, but people remember when they were remembered. Somebody reached out. Somebody texted me. And that, all of us can do that, so I like that, too.

- Dr. Matthew C.: [54:13](#) Just kind of going along with that, when I was a teenager, probably around 17-years-old or so, I remember struggling with some things and wondering if the Lord loved me, if I was good enough for the Lord. One Sunday I'm sitting in my front room just kind of having some of these thoughts and there's a knock on the door. I open it up and it's my bishop. I don't remember what he said to me. I remember talking to him about some things, but I really can't remember what he said, but I will never forget that he came by, that he acted on a prompting to come by and that helped me to know, "Okay, the Lord is aware of me and he does love me." It is a very simple thing sometimes that we do that can really lift someone up.
- Hank Smith: [55:12](#) He'll hate this that I'm talking about him, but we've had Alex Baugh on the podcast before. When my father passed away just recently, this last March, Alex came to my house. When I answered the door, I was surprised to see him. I said, "Alex, what are you doing?" He said, "Well, I was on my way home." Now, I know Alex lives north of BYU and I live south of BYU. So unless Alex takes a very, very strange route home, he was not on his way home. He took a long drive out of his way, came over and just said, "I've been thinking about you. I brought some goodies over for the kids," and we sat in my doorway and chatted for just 10, 15 minutes then he walked away. I watched him drive away and I thought, "Oh, I needed that." I needed that. That really just gave me a boost that I really needed today. So succor the weak, lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees. I promise you, anyone listening, there is someone close to you who fits that description and we can go find them.
- Dr. Matthew C.: [56:38](#) Isn't it interesting too that those phrases, this isn't just in this revelation, the Lord says the same thing in Isaiah 35:3. He says the same thing in Hebrews 12:12. This must be important to the Lord that we're there to support each other and there to help those who are feeling weak if he's repeating it in almost all of the standard works.
- Hank Smith: [57:06](#) I mean, Matt said it's as simple as just sending a text saying you're thinking about someone. Let's put this into practice right now. Let's not wait, but make sure you come back because you want to hear the rest.
- John Bytheway: [57:23](#) No, that's great. I just think it's never been easier. I mean, I was in the car the other day and thought about somebody. My hands were firm at 10:00 and 2:00, but I could say, "Hey Siri, send a text to and say this, 'I'm thinking about you,'" and it's so easy today to check in with folks and see how they're doing. I

mean, it's never been easier, right? Yeah, don't send me letters. I was at 10:00 and 2:00. I was driving safely, but I can talk to my phone and it'll do nice things.

Hank Smith: 57:54

I remember in C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* where you got a devil character writing to another devil character. He said, "The thing you want to do is get them to think about doing service in other continents, that other people on other continents need their help and have them forget about their neighbor." That service is always so far away. I've always thought about that, that if everyone just helped their neighbor... What does the Lord say? "The earth is sufficient. There is enough."

Hank Smith: 58:38

Please join us for Part II of this podcast.