

EPISODE 30 • PART II



Dr. Matthew C. Godfrey

D&C 81-83



- John Bytheway: 00:03 Welcome to Part II of this week's podcast.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 Between 81 and 82 is April 14th, 1832. And we've been talking about all these terrible things that the Church is going through, but something really good happens on April 14th, 1832, at least for me personally and I know, John, for you too. A man, I think it's two families joined the Church, the Youngs and the Kimballs. Can you tell us a little bit about that, Matt?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 00:34 So yeah, in April of 1832, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Vilate Kimball, Miriam Young are baptized.
- Hank Smith: 00:43 That by the way, Matt, has a little bit of impact on the Church, the future of the Church. Wouldn't you say?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 00:51 Just a little. Just a little.
- John Bytheway: 00:54 Yeah.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 00:55 The great thing about this is that what happens in April, 1832 is actually the culmination of a couple of years of work. And so Samuel Smith in 1830 goes on a mission, he takes the book of Mormon with him back into the Eastern United States, and he meets Brigham Young's sister, Rhoda, who is married to John P. Green. And he leaves the book with Rhoda and John and they read it, they're intrigued by it, and they share it with others around them. And so Rhoda shares it with Brigham. It's shared with Heber C. Kimball at the same time, too, Heber's Brigham's best friend. And so they became familiar with the Book of Mormon in 1830.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 01:43 In the fall of 1831, there's missionaries that came to Mendon, New York, which is where Brigham and Heber were living, and they preached the gospel to them. Brigham and Heber hear this, they're intrigued by it. And I think this is interesting because it kind of shows Brigham and Heber who they were as individuals. So they hear the gospel preached. Evidently there wasn't a branch in Mendon at the time or a congregation of saints at the time, because Brigham and Heber, after these missionaries have

talked to them, they decided, well, we need to go see what this Church is like in action. And so they traveled to Columbia, Pennsylvania with their wives and they spent about a week there attending church meetings, talking to church members, again, just kind of trying to see what this look like in the lives of people who are actually living these principles.

Dr. Matthew C.: 02:47

And they like what they see there. They like it so much that after Brigham gets back from Pennsylvania, he decides that he's going to go up to Canada where his brother, Joseph, is because he wants to tell Joseph this. And so he goes up there, he tells Joseph about what he's experienced and Joseph Young thinks, yeah, this sounds great. And so he comes back with Brigham, they come back to Mendon. And in the spring of 1832, Brigham's baptized. And like I said, shortly after that, his wife, Miriam, is baptized as well, Heber C. Kimball and Vilate Kimball are also baptized around the same time. So they're baptized in April of 1832. Unfortunately, not long after that, Brigham's wife, Miriam, dies, leaving him with two young children. So he actually moves in with Heber and Vilate. They kind of take him in to help take care of the children.

Dr. Matthew C.: 03:48

And in the fall of 1832, Heber and Brigham decide that they want to meet Joseph Smith because they haven't met them up to this time. And so they traveled to Kirtland. And when they get to Kirtland, they're told that Joseph's out chopping wood in a forest, and so they go out to the forest, they see Joseph there chopping the wood, they talk to him as he's doing so. And Brigham Young's later history says about this experience. He said, "Here my joy was full at the privilege of shaking the hand of the prophet of God. And I received the shared testimony by the spirit of prophecy that he was all that any man could believe him to be as a true prophet." And so this kind of launches Brigham and Heber C. Kimball on the path that they will take like you were saying, Hank, is pretty influential on the Church.

Dr. Matthew C.: 04:43

Heber C. Kimball when he's ordained an apostle, he's told that millions will be converted at his hand, and you can read that and say, "What? Millions? That's just an exaggeration." But then you think about all the people he baptized on his two missions to England, and you think about all their descendants, and I think that could very well run into the millions of people who were in the church because of Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young. We're actually starting a project right now in the Publications Division of the Church History Department, where we're going to publish a collection of Brigham's letters to the Saints to kind of show why people followed him? What was it about Brigham that attracted the Saints to him?

- Dr. Matthew C.: 05:28 And so as I've been going through some of his letters in the 1856, 1857 time period, it's interesting because you do get the Brigham Young, who's kind of bombastic and kind of lays down the law. But there are a lot of letters where there's a much softer side of him where he's telling the Saints, "Just do the best you can, and don't worry about this and try to follow the spirit." So you can see from some of these letters that there is kind of a different side of Brigham. So I would probably say read both of them and you'll just kind of reach your own conclusions about Brigham from them.
- Hank Smith: 06:10 Well, someone asked me the other day, if you could choose any moment in Church History to witness, what would you witness besides the big ones? I said, "Well, let's knock out the big ones." I said, "I would love to see that moment that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young meet." Right? Because that's a coming together of two people and Heber C. Kimball who are going to change history and impact all of our lives. So I'm really glad we mentioned that. So they don't meet when they're baptized. They meet later in the year.
- John Bytheway: 06:50 Well, Matt, let's go into the text and the content of Section 82. And maybe first you could tell us specifically who's this revelation for and where, and then we can get dyed into the text.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 07:02 Yeah. So this revelation comes at a council of high priests and elders that Joseph Smith held in Missouri in April of 1832. It's a council that he holds specifically because the Lord has told him in what Section 78 in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord told him, "You need to go to Missouri and you need to sit in council with the Saints there." And so Joseph and Sidney, Newel K. Whitney, Jesse Gause actually accompanies them on this trip too. They go to Missouri and they have this council of high priests and elders. And what Joseph is supposed to counsel with the saints about is this establishment of an organization that can supervise and manage the publication and mercantile endeavors of the Church. And so they talk about this at this conference and Section 82 is revealed to Joseph Smith in this conference.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 07:59 And I think there's really four main components of this revelation. So the first part acknowledges the necessity of forgiving other people and the importance of doing that. And that stems from a very specific incident that has occurred prior to this revelation being received. So when Joseph goes to Missouri in July of 1831, when he first goes there and he gets the revelation that, that's where the city of Zion is supposed to be, he's also told in that revelation that Edward Partridge, who's

the Bishop of the Church, he supposed to move to Zion, and he's supposed to supervise the purchasing of land and the distributing of inheritances. And as Edward started to think about what land to buy in Jackson County, he and Joseph got into an argument about this, and they apparently were arguing over what parcels of land were the best to buy.

Dr. Matthew C.: 09:08

Edward wanted to buy certain parcels, Joseph and Oliver Cowdery thought that there was a different area that was better suited for the Church. And so they have, I think, a pretty heated argument about it. As a side note, if you're reading in Section 58 in the Doctrine and Covenants, there's a couple of verses in there where it talks about Edward Partridge needing to repent. And those verses are referring to this disagreement that he and Joseph have. So they have this disagreement and Sidney Rigdon believes that Edward has insulted Joseph Smith in this. And so after Joseph and Sidney go back to Ohio in the fall of 1831, Sydney actually procures charges against Edward Partridge for insulting the prophet. And there's a council that's held in Missouri in March of 1832 where they consider the charges. Edward is very penitent about it. He says, according to the minutes of this meeting, that he feels sorry for the argument he has had ever since it happened, and he hopes that Joseph can forgive him of this.

Dr. Matthew C.: 10:22

And it seems like Joseph was able to forgive him, but Sidney wasn't. And even after this council's held, Sydney still just can't put this behind them. And so at this Council of Elders that's held in April of 1832, Joseph takes Edward and Sidney and essentially helps them to reconcile with each other and to forgive each other. And so when you have these first initial verses in Section 82, talking about the necessity of forgiving, the importance of forgiving, it's related to this disagreement that Edward and Sidney Rigdon have been having for quite some time, and their reconciliation for this.

Hank Smith: 11:04

All right, Matt, I remember reading in the *Know Brother Joseph* book, there's an essay on Joseph Smith's ability to forgive almost to a fault that he was just so quick to forgive. And that's interesting Sydney's still upset, and he wasn't the one being yelled at, right?

Dr. Matthew C.: 11:27

Right. Yeah. Yeah, Joseph, he always... I think some of this stems from the fact that Joseph had kind of a quick temper, and sometimes when his temper would show, he would always feel bad afterwards, and he'd always go and apologize to the person. And so I think because Joseph recognized that he needed forgiveness at times, I think he was very willing to extend

forgiveness to those around him. So the second part of the revelation is this instruction to form the United Firm, this organization to supervise the mercantile and publishing endeavors. And the Lord says in this section he lists by name the nine individuals who are supposed to be the members of this United Firm. And it's interesting when you look at the nine individuals who are named, each of them has a very specific stewardship over something in the Church.

- Dr. Matthew C.: 12:30 So you have the six men who are the members of the Literary Firm, the six who are the stewards over the revelations. In addition to those six, you have the two bishops in the Church, Edward Partridge and Newel K Whitney, who are responsible for Edward for purchasing land in Missouri, Newel's responsible for keeping a store in Kirtland. And then the ninth member of the United Firm is Sidney Gilbert, who again, is the one who's responsible for the store in Independence. So you can see very clearly why the Lord says, "These are the nine that need to be the ones coordinating these efforts, because they're the nine that had the responsibility, the stewardship over publishing and over the churches storehouses." And the Lord tells them in this section, in this revelation, the Lord tells them that they need to bind themselves together.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 13:32 And He's speaking there, I think, both in terms of kind of spiritual binding together, but there's also a very practical temporal binding that He's talking about here, where He wanted them to enter into a legal bond with each other so that each of them were responsible as a collective whole for the mercantile and publishing endeavors. And so they do that. We have minutes of a meeting of the United Firm that's held after this, where they say that William W. Phelps is supposed to be the one to draft this bond, this legal agreement that they're supposed to enter into. And I think that's important as a backdrop for the verse that I think many church members know from the section, and that's where the Lord says, "I the Lord am bound when you do what I say, but if you do not what I say, you have no promise."
- Dr. Matthew C.: 14:33 And so I think it is the Lord's kind of telling them, "I want you in a very real practical sense to be bound together." I think He's telling them to, and you need to realize that, yes, I don't enter into a legal bond with you, but I am just as bound to do what I've said that I will do as you are bound to do what you say that you will do legally after you've entered into this bond. And so I think that's important to consider just how serious the Lord takes it, that when you do what He says, He has to bless you, He's bound to bless you for those things, which kind of reminds

me when King Benjamin's talking to the Nephites in Mosiah, and he talks about how you can never get out of the Lord's debt, because whenever you do what he says, he blesses you and those blessings just multiply over time. And so you're always going to be in the debt of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father, because of that.

- Hank Smith: 15:42 That's great.
- John Bytheway: 15:43 Matt, there's another verse that I think a lot of people have used to kind of beat themselves up and that's verse 7. And I wonder how much of verse 7 we can say was specific to this context. This has been a throw up your hands verse for some of my students. Well, look if I sin again, all the former sins return, and I'm probably going to sin again maybe in the near future, and it sounds like I have to be perfect. Is part of this specific to this situation? Or do you know what I'm asking?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 16:20 Yeah. So yeah, it's interesting because for me, I kind of read that verse, not so much as a verse of discouragement, although I can see how you could read it that way. But as a verse, as to where the Lord's saying essentially in verse 6, He's saying, "There's no one on the earth that's doing good, everyone's gone out of their way." But He's saying, "But even with that, I forgive you. When you repent, I forgive and just go on with your life and do the best you can, and I'll be there always willing to forgive when you repent." So I don't know if the former sins have a specific application here. If the Lord's telling Sydney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, "If you can't put this behind you-
- John Bytheway: 17:20 If you're going to fight again.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 17:21 Yeah, if you get in another fight that the former sin returns. And in fact, I don't even really know what that would mean. I don't know how that would work. Maybe he's just telling them, "Look in order to build the City of Zion, you need to be unified. And if you can't be unified with each other, if you're going to keep fighting with each other, you're never going to be able to create that unity." Maybe it's something like that, that the Lord's saying here.
- Hank Smith: 17:47 Yeah. I have a completely different thought, John, than students who hear that going, oh, all my sins come back. And I think we've probably taught that wrong in the past as teachers saying, "Well, if you sin again, all of those sins come back." I think there's a warning here of this idea of, don't go back to your sins. What does Paul say? We've returned to our sins like a dog to its vomit. The Savior gives a parable in Matthew, Chapter 12 about

a man who gets rid of an evil spirit, but doesn't fill his life with other things, his house, with other things and all these other evil spirits come back. So I wonder if the Lord is saying here, "I am not going to forgive you, stay away from sin because if you go back to sin, all your bad habits will come back. Don't let that happen." Instead of I'm going to hold you accountable, again, for every other sin.

- Hank Smith: 18:53 I would love to see that taught differently, because, John, I don't think that's a very encouraging thought, is it? "Well, you repented, you did really well. Oh you did it again, all your former repentance is gone." It's like it never happened, right? That's a discouraging thought.
- John Bytheway: 19:13 Yeah. And that's why I like what you said. The parable you referred to is in the footnotes there. It's a good thing to read along with that, and I'm thinking if it is Mosiah 26, "And as often as my people repented, I forgave them." And as we talked about in a previous podcast, you repent relentlessly, right? And I hope this isn't discouraging when you think, "Well, I'm probably going to sin again, aren't I?" Well, yeah, probably it's a long life, but look how merciful the Lord is. And I like the first part of it. "I will not lay any sin to your charge, go your ways and send no more." And I think He knows we will, that we'll make mistakes, but provision has been made for that as well. Anyway yeah, I do wish we could teach that better because I don't want that to be a discouraging verse.
- Hank Smith: 20:06 Yeah. And how frustrating for anyone, but especially a teenager who is trying their best to stop whatever habit they have. Eventually I think you're right, John, you're just like, I can't. I can't, I give up, right? I'll take the Terrestrial Kingdom because I just can't do this.
- John Bytheway: 20:31 Well, it kind of makes repentance sound like a one-time thing. I think that's why it can be scary. It sounds like, I got to do this one time, because if I don't make it this one time and live perfectly thereafter, it's all for not, it's all going to come back. And that's why I think it can be a scary verse for some.
- Hank Smith: 20:55 John, I think you're right here that there are so many other verses in the Doctrine and Covenants and other places in scripture where the Lord talks about how quick He is to forgive and to forget our sins, that this verse, if someone were to use it as, hey, if you sin again, you're now guilty of all those former sins, I think that would be taking this verse out of context and be doctrinally incorrect.

- John Bytheway: 21:25 I would like to believe this is more about how you can sin and still be loyal to Christ and relying on Christ as your Savior. And I think returning to a sinful life is maybe a different thing than committing a sin. And I'd like to believe it's more about loyalty to Christ than living morally perfect, which none of us can do and won't do for the rest of our lives. And I think that, that is taking everything else into context with this.
- Hank Smith: 21:56 Yeah, I wonder if he's almost saying something like, but unto that soul who stops repenting, you're on the wrong track, right? Keep repenting-
- John Bytheway: 22:06 Yeah, maybe going back to a sinful life and if you take this in con... And this is what I love about having the standard works, we have so many places to look to get an overall picture of things and not take one verse and make it the whole gospel, right? Or beat ourselves up with it. We take a lot of verses and put them all together. And the one that I mentioned, let me grab my Book of Mormon. Go to Mosiah 26:30. And I seem to remember in an Institute Manual, it actually put this verse and that verse together, and said, "Look, look at them together and see what you think" So let's see. Mosiah 26:38, "And as often as my people repent, well, I forgive them their trespasses against me. And you should also forgive one another your trespasses." That verse, verse 30 is awesome. In fact, the student manual, the book student manual says, "Every young person should have this verse memorized as a source of hope."
- Hank Smith: 23:15 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 23:16 So if I had to pick one, I might pick this one, but I also don't want to think I can deliberately sin over and over. And maybe when we put these two together, we can get some wisdom with that with a little inspiration.
- Hank Smith: 23:29 Very good. Very good. Yeah. I like this idea that one single verse cannot cancel out 100s of other verses about the Lord's forgiveness.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 23:43 Well, I think a third kind of large thing comes out of this is the importance of Kirtland, Ohio in the scheme of things and how it relates to the City of Zion. So the Lord says in this section, starting in verse 12, and talking about how this United Firm would be managing these mercantile and publishing endeavors both in Zion and in Kirtland, He says in verse 13, "I've consecrated the land of Kirtland in my own due time for the benefit of the saints of the most high and for a stake to Zion." So Kirtland at the time, if you're looking at what the Church looks

like at this time, you have a large body of Saints who are in Missouri trying to build the city of Zion there, but you also have a large body of Saints who are in Kirtland. And then you have throughout the Eastern United States smaller congregations, what we would call branches that exist. But the two main locations for the Church are in Kirtland and in Missouri.

Dr. Matthew C.: 24:52

And when the Lord first told the saints that they needed to go to Kirtland back in January, 1831 and what's now Doctrine and Covenant section 38, he said that Kirtland would be a temporary place for members of the Church to stay until the Lord identified where the new Jerusalem was. Well, the new Jerusalem, of course, has been identified at this point. It's in Jackson county where a lot of the Saints are, but the Lord also told the Saints in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 51, that he had consecrated Kirtland, "For a little season until I, the Lord shall provide for them otherwise." And then in September of 1831, another revelation Section 64, the Lord says that He would retain a strong hold in the land of Kirtland for the, "Space of five years." And so you kind of see over time that the Lord is regarding Kirtland as a fairly important place for the Saints to gather.

Dr. Matthew C.: 25:54

And here he says it's supposed to be a stake of Zion, it's supposed to be something that supports the building of the City of Zion in Jackson County. And so we see this play out throughout the Church's history, that there remains kind of these two locations of where most of the Saints are living in the United States up until 1838. And that finally in 1838, because of persecution, dissension, and other things going on in Kirtland, Joseph Smith is forced to flee Kirtland and he comes over to Missouri, and that kind of leads to an exodus of the Latter-day Saints from Kirtland. And so they're there roughly for about seven years that a large body of Saints are in Kirtland, which is a little longer than the five years that the Lord said in September of 1831, but not a great deal longer than that.

Dr. Matthew C.: 26:54

So you kind of see the playing out of this--that Kirtland does serve as a support to the building of the City of Zion for a number of years, and then the Saints gathered in Missouri. Of course, everything happens in Missouri that you'll be talking about later and then the saints end up in the Nauvoo area. But I think this just kind of highlights the importance of Kirtland and the Lord's plans.

Hank Smith: 27:23

So from 1831 through 1838, we've got two centers of the Church, and it's not a short distance between the two. That's the thing. You can't shoot an email over to Edward Partridge saying, "Hey, do this." I think we've talked about this before,

John. But if it's like, hey, we need some direction from Joseph on this, we'll send a letter, and maybe-

- John Bytheway: 27:49 A month later.
- Hank Smith: 27:50 A month, two months later, we'll get an answer. That's interesting, Matt, when you said that five years, that gets you just past the dedication of the temple.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 28:00 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 28:01 Right?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 28:02 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 28:02 Maybe the Lord's like, that's what we needed.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 28:05 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 28:06 Those keys are there, we can move on.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 28:09 Well, and it kind of shows that the Lord really is in charge because he's commanded the saints at this point to build a temple in Jackson County, which they never really get started on. But it's not going to be until December of 1832, that he's going to tell them to build a temple in Kirtland as well. And what's one reason why they need to build a temple in Kirtland? Because the Lord knows what's going to happen in Jackson County. They're not going to be able to stay there, but they're going to need a temple. They're going to need this endowment of power that they get in the temple. So it's just interesting to see how everything kind of unfolds.
- Hank Smith: 28:50 So that was verse 13, you mentioned that I have consecrated the land of Kirtland in my own due time for the benefits of the Saints for a stake of Zion. It's not Zion itself, it's a stake of Zion.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 29:03 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 29:03 And then verse 14, for Zion must increase. And then we're speaking of not just a state of being, but we're speaking of Missouri there, right?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 29:13 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 29:13 Its stake's strengthened.

- Dr. Matthew C.: 29:18 And it's interesting too, because sometimes people talk about this period of time, and when the saints are in Clay County about the stake in Zion, but there's no stake in Zion. Zion is Zion and the stakes are the locations outside of Zion that support it's building up.
- Hank Smith: 29:43 It's an Isaiah word. Is that stakes and enlarge their borders and the stakes? That's why we call them stakes today from these revelations, which I would think come from the idea that Isaiah brought a long time ago.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 30:02 Yeah. You can kind of think of Zion as being the tent. And so the settlements in Missouri are the tent and then these other congregations of Saints are the stakes that help support the tent and keep the tent and place.
- Hank Smith: 30:17 Matt, are these nine, are they all going to stay there in Missouri?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 30:23 No. So some of them are in Missouri, some of them are in Ohio. So Joseph Smith of course will be in Ohio. He didn't move to Missouri until 1838. Sidney Rigdon will be in Ohio, Newel K. Whitney will be as well. Martin Harris is in Ohio as well. And then you have Edward Partridge, Sydney Gilbert, John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and William W. Phelps all in Missouri.
- Hank Smith: 30:52 Okay.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 30:53 But one of the kind of interesting things about this United Firm that's set up is that it not only... So kind of get in the way a little bit, the United Firm only lasts for about two years and then it's disbanded in 1834 in Section 104 in the Doctrine and Covenants. But for that period of two years when it existed, not only was it managing the Church's temporal affairs, but it also kind of served as a de facto board of directors for Joseph Smith, he could say. And what I mean by that is that whenever Joseph wanted to get information about what was going on in Missouri, he would send letters to the members of the United Firm in Missouri. And so you can see that Joseph considered this administrative body as being a little bit more than just responsible for purchasing goods for the storehouses or overseeing the printing operation. He considered those men who are in this organization to kind of be the leaders of the Church.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 32:03 And so he's writing to Edward Partridge and John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery and others to get intelligence about what's going on in Missouri. And so it really does kind of serve as kind

of a key leadership organization for the Church for about two years.

Hank Smith: 32:22 Okay. Until we get, that's about the time that the Twelve come in as well.

Dr. Matthew C.: 32:30 Yeah. So it disbands about a year before Joseph establishes the Quorum of the Twelve. But what does happen is in February of 1834, just a couple of months before the United Firm was disbanded, Joseph established the Kirtland High Council. And the High Council actually starts to take on more of the responsibility for supervising temporal things. So it's really the Kirtland High Council that kind of fills the void of the United Firm.

Hank Smith: 33:03 That's interesting. You can kind of see that they're dealing with it, but the Church is going to grow, so they're going to have to adjust who's in charge of what and how, and then it's just going to do it again, and then it's going to do it again. Yeah, I love to see it. I love to see it grow and I love to see them adjusting. Is there anything towards the end of the section that stands out to you? I mean, he does talk about them being equal, managing their stewardships for the benefit of the Church, and improving upon your talent, right?

Dr. Matthew C.: 33:42 Every man seeks the interest of his neighbor, which is something we already touched on earlier about how important it is to serve those around you. And this is kind of also explaining how the United Firm was supposed to work. And so just kind of briefly, they were hoping that when they published the compilation of Joseph's revelations, that they would be able to sell those, that those would generate money that they could then use to purchase goods for the storehouses of the church. Now, the storehouses could be used, like members of the Church who are poor, and then he could go to the storehouses and get goods there, but they were also for-profit stores as well. And so they would sell goods to people too.

Dr. Matthew C.: 34:29 And so as they sold goods in the storehouse, they hoped that would generate money that they could then use to help support the printing efforts. So it was kind of this symbiotic relationship between the two, which never actually really worked out that way, which is one reason why the United Firm was disbanded, because once the Saints were kicked out of Jackson County in 1833, they didn't have the storehouse there anymore. But they're still responsible for the debts that they entered into to buy the goods for this storehouse. And they don't have the printing operation as well. And so that kind of throws a wrench

into the whole thing. The United Firm fell into quite a bit of debt, and that's why they decided to disband it in 1834.

- Dr. Matthew C.: 35:18 But then the other thing that that's important for this is that the idea was that if there was anything, any profits that were created through these things that were not needed for the poor and the needy, or to run these storehouses or the printing operation, that those who are members of the United Firm could draw on those to support their families, because their full-time job really was the Church at this time. And so that was the other hope that somehow by doing these things, they could provide for the necessities that their families had by managing their stewardships wisely. I do find it interesting too, in verse 22, where the Lord says, "Make unto yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness" where I think He's basically saying we have a church here, you have to have money to operate the Church and all of the different things that we have going on. And so you're going to have to go out into the world. You're going to have to, at this time, get some loans for things because the Church just doesn't have the money to fund these things.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 36:34 And so he's telling them that it's okay to do this at this time because they need funds in order to make this all happen.
- John Bytheway: 36:42 Okay. So it looks to me like if you look at Section 83, still in Missouri, Section 84, here he returns back to Kirtland. So this trip to Missouri gives us these two sections, 82 and 83. So what's 83 all about?
- Dr. Matthew C.: 37:00 So 83 also kind of has its roots in the Law of Consecration and trying to define further what would happen to a woman whose husband had consecrated his property, but had then died. And also what would happen to children who were orphaned, how they would be taken care of by the Church as well. And we don't have a lot of good background behind the section. What we do know is that the couple of days before the section was given to Joseph Smith, he had traveled from Independence to Coal Township in Jackson County, which is about 12 miles away. And he had gone there because the Colesville saints, so saints who were from Colesville, New York had moved to Coal Township. And many of these individuals were Joseph's good friends, people who had supported him almost from the beginning like the Knight family and others.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 38:11 Now, it's possible, again, we don't know this for sure, but there were at least a couple of women among the saints in Coal Township who were widows. So Phoebe Crosby Peck and Anna

Slate Rogers, both of them, their husbands had passed away. And so perhaps in kind of associating with them, Joseph had started to wonder, yeah, "What happens if somebody consecrated their property to the Church and then died? What would happen to their widow, to their surviving spouse?" And you have to remember that in the 19th century, at this time, women did not have a lot of rights. Essentially when they married, they gave up all their rights to property to their husband. If their husband died, they had what was called a Dowager's right, which was a right to a third of the property. But that was essentially it.

Dr. Matthew C.: 39:10

And if you think about it, when the Law of Consecration is revealed in Section 42, it doesn't say anything about what happens if someone who's consecrated property has died. And so you'll know that when this revelation begins, Section 83, the first verse says, "Verily, thus sayeth the Lord in addition to the laws of the church concerning women and children." And so He's kind of saying, "In addition to what I've already told you in Section 42, let me clarify a few things here." And so then He goes into the fact that if somebody dies, that a woman can still have right to that property that's been consecrated to the inheritance that has been given, and that all children have claim on their parents for their maintenance until they are of age. That essentially means that those who have children have a claim on their parents. And if you don't have parents, if you're orphans, then the storehouse of the Church and the church would take care of you in those conditions.

Dr. Matthew C.: 40:18

So I'd see this as kind of like a very practical revelation, kind of dealing with how the Law of Consecration works and how the church should take care of those who are widowed or orphaned at the time. That's one of the main reasons why the Law of Consecration is given, to take care of the poor and the needy. And the Lord seems to constantly be reiterating to the saints that you need to take care of those who aren't able to take care of themselves, that that's really what it means to be a saint, to have charity that you look out for those who need your help.

Hank Smith: 41:01

It seems like you wrote the *Come, Follow Me Manual* here, Matt. It says, "what do you learn from Section 83 about how the Lord feels about widows and orphans? Do you know anyone in this situation who would benefit from your love or care?" I remember when my sister, her husband made some decisions then he left. And I remember her saying, she didn't want help. She kept saying, "I don't need help from the Church. I'm fine. I'm fine." And I said, "In a way, I know that your husband, he didn't pass away, but he's not helping. He's gone. He left. You could be

considered a widow." So when I read this, I also think of just single mothers, right? Not maybe that their husband has passed away, but their husband has walked away. And that we need to be there.

- Hank Smith: 42:04 I mean, how many single mothers are there in this Church that are doing it all? They are raising kids on their own, working as well. And how we could support them I would think is crucial to the Lord. What do you both think about that? I have two sisters that are single mothers and they have backbones of steel and hearts of gold. They're just something else.
- John Bytheway: 42:43 One of the things that is so crucial is you're a single mom and you have boys, to be able to take them to Church and have the boys see men at the Church that are committed and that are striving to live the gospel so that they can look and see role models if dad is gone, that they can be strengthened by that and see to model what manhood might look like for them. I think that's a wonderful thing that the Church can provide as a sense of community when sometimes there's something missing in the family. So I'm glad you said that.
- Hank Smith: 43:23 Yeah.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 43:23 And I think Elder Cook just talked about that in this last General Conference where-
- John Bytheway: 43:30 It talked about bishops.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 43:32 Yeah. And he talked about his own experience where his father wasn't active and they moved to a place or a new ward and a member of the Bishopric when a Father and Sons outing was coming up, invited Elder Cook to come with him to that.
- John Bytheway: 43:50 Yeah, that's right.
- Dr. Matthew C.: 43:53 And that had a great impact on Elder Cook that this man would care enough about him to try to do that. And then he talked about how not long after that, this member of the Bishopric passed away at a pretty young age and then his family benefited from other leaders and others in the ward stepping in and helping him to raise his children as well.
- John Bytheway: 44:18 Beautiful.
- Hank Smith: 44:20 Yeah. This to me is you don't have to look very far, I don't think, for a single mother or a child who needs an adult figure in their

life to bless them. I can't imagine anybody listening today going, "I don't know any of those." Right? I remember, like I said, my sister, she did not want help, and I had to somehow convince her that this is why we have these fast offerings for people like you, right? And she said, "No, we'll be fine. We'll be fine." And I said, "This is exactly who it's for. This storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the Church and the widows and orphans shall be provided for." That's exactly who it's for. So sometimes part of this is allowing yourself to be served by the Church.

John Bytheway: 45:22

Well, there were times when I was a Bishop, when I didn't offer things, I just told people things, we are taking care of that. Because I felt inspired to, because some people who had never asked for any help really needed it, but would feel so uncomfortable asking. So, I kind of had to step in and say, "Oh, we're taking over. We want to help you here." So that was some of the joys of being a Bishop. When somebody who's so faithful and didn't want to ask for help, but you knew they needed it and you could step in and say, "Let the Lord's storehouse help you."

Hank Smith: 46:02

And maybe if your family doesn't look like the perfect family that maybe you feel like you don't belong in the church, right? When there's only one parent there and you absolutely do. That's what this is about, Matt. I'm glad you brought that up. It does seem like a practical type thing or what are we legally going to do. Oh, I wanted to mention one thing and see what you thought. He says in verse three, "If the woman, the widow are not faithful, they shall not have fellowship in the Church. They're not going to be in the Church. They chose to leave it, but they get to keep their land." I see in that verse the Lord saying, we're not going to force anybody to stay in the Church by threat, or I can't leave the Church because I'll lose my land. And the Lord is saying, "No, no, no, we're not going to do it that way. There is no force to stay in the Church for this woman who perhaps might leave it." And to me, that's a testament to the Lord's love of agency. He won't force anyone. Am I reading that correctly?

Dr. Matthew C.: 47:16

We all. I mean, I'll just say for me, I need to remember better that my relationship to the Church has no bearing on my value in the eyes of my Heavenly Father, that He loves me regardless and always will love me no matter what it is that I do. I get asked quite a bit how working on the Joseph Smith Papers has affected my testimony. And sometimes when I'm asked that question, I think the assumption on the part of the person asking it is that it's had a negative effect on my testimony. And actually nothing could be further from the truth. I grew up in a family where

history was present. My father has a PhD in History and my mom has a master's degree in History. And so Joseph Smith and History was just kind of always around me, but I felt like I didn't really know a lot about Joseph Smith until I started working on the Joseph Smith Papers. And I spent almost 11 years now working on the project.

Dr. Matthew C.: 48:25

And it's just been a real privilege to be able to delve that deeply into Joseph Smith's life. I've learned a lot about Joseph as a person, about Joseph as a prophet. And one of the things that I've learned is that Joseph really wasn't that different from you or I. I think sometimes we think that this great prophet of this dispensation was just in constant communication with God. And he certainly had grand visions, like the First Vision and the visitation of Jesus Christ to him in the Kirtland Temple, just extraordinary spiritual experiences. But I think those were the outliers and that most of the time he was getting revelation the same way you and I get revelation to his mind and to his heart.

Dr. Matthew C.: 49:28

And he had to struggle at times in moments where he was asking God questions and God wasn't giving him answers, and he had to kind of do the best that he could until the Lord saw fit to reveal more to him. And so that's made Joseph Smith a much more real person to me. And it's increased my admiration for him tenfold because I just look at myself and I think if I was in that situation right now and was trying to establish a church and lead a church at the same time that I'm just trying to deal with normal ordinary life, I don't think I could do that. But Joseph Smith could. And of course, a large reason why he could is because the Lord supports those that he calls and puts in those positions. But my love and respect for Joseph Smith has just grown so much.

Dr. Matthew C.: 50:28

And I look forward to the day when I pass on from this life and I hope I can meet him. I hope he'll think that we've been fair to him with the Joseph Smith Papers, that we've depicted him in a way that is accurate to who he was as a person. And I know now more than ever that he was a prophet of this Restoration and that the Lord did an extraordinary work through him.

Hank Smith: 51:01

Thank you so much. Thank you. I personally love the Joseph Smith Papers Project, not necessarily because I'm going to read every page of those massive books, but because of what would he say in Section 89, "Because of evil and conspiring men," we're going to do the Joseph Smith Papers Project so you can know him. You can know who he was and what his character was." John, how did we get this lucky? How did we get blessed to do this?

- John Bytheway: [51:42](#) I think about it all the time. This has totally changed my Doctrine and Covenants, and I thought I'd read it before, but every one of these sections now I've got notes all over and it's really helpful. I think I've got a better backdrop of the history and that helps, but I'm constantly reminded how young these people were in this Restoration. And as Matt was talking about that personal responsibility, you must feel, Matt, that I hope Joseph feels we've treated him fairly. I'm like, wow, yeah, because you're part of getting these papers out. But I'm so glad, Matt, that you're seeing that his character comes through, and I love the project too.
- Dr. Matthew C.: [52:26](#) Thank you very much. I really enjoyed those. I've learned a lot too, from both of you, a lot of great insights. So I just really appreciate it.
- Hank Smith: [52:35](#) That was a lot of fun. We want to thank all of our listeners. This would not be happening without you. And it seems like we're gaining more and more of you. So welcome to our audience. We're grateful for you. We want to thank our Executive Producers, Steve and Shannon Sorenson. We have a great production crew, John. And if we don't mention them, we would be very ungrateful because they do the work.
- John Bytheway: [53:03](#) We have the easy, fun part actually.
- Hank Smith: [53:04](#) Yeah. David Perry does so much work on this podcast. Lisa Spice, yeah, I can't tell you. I just wish I could somehow just list off all the things Lisa Spice does for this podcast. Jamie Nelson in Social Media, Kyle Nelson who just donated so much of his time and energy to us. Will Staughton, who has to hear the long versions of these and edit them. And we love him. And we have Maria Hilton who works on our show notes and our transcription. So we just love our team and we want to thank them. And we hope all of you will join us for our next episode of followHIM.