



“God Meant It Unto Good”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Friday and Saturday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

How does generational conflict affect the decision to sell Joseph into slavery? Dr. Michael Wilcox returns to discuss reconciliation, familial conflict, forgiveness, and God’s redemption.

Part 2:

Dr. Michael Wilcox develops the ideas that forgiveness frees our futures, how God teaches us to be merciful, and how the Lord can take every tragedy and create triumph.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Genesis 37-41– Part 1 Dr. Michael Wilcox
- 01:12 Introduction of Dr. S. Michael Wilcox
- 02:54 GK Chesterton’s problem with society
- 04:08 Joseph is a story of spiritual triumph
- 07:42 Joseph’s story of reconciliation
- 11:09 Joseph’s story begins with Laban
- 12:27 Leah’s son’s names may be an affront to Rachel
- 17:58 Dr. Wilcox shares idea of cows that lick the grass and push on the fence
- 19:28 Genesis teaches us about families and Joseph’s is a case study
- 24:07 Hank shares personal story where his sisters made the best of tough situations
- 24:47 God can make negatives into positives
- 28:08 Joseph forgives his brothers
- 30:01 Ruben defiles Bilhah
- 33:47 Jacob blesses Joseph’s children
- 38:35 Fulfillment of Joseph's dream—they bow in gratitude
- 40:42 Joseph tests if his brothers have changed
- 43:47 The gift of not making the same mistake twice
- 48:22 Judah offers to take Benjamin’s place
- 50:34 Dr. Wilcox shares story of adopted granddaughter
- 53:10 *The Great Divorce* by CS Lewis
- 58:26 The Prodigal Son is for publican and sinners
- 59:20 Dr. Wilcox shares a personal story about his father
- 1:08:42 Reconciliation scenes are moving and powerful
- 1:12:47 End of Part I

Part 2:

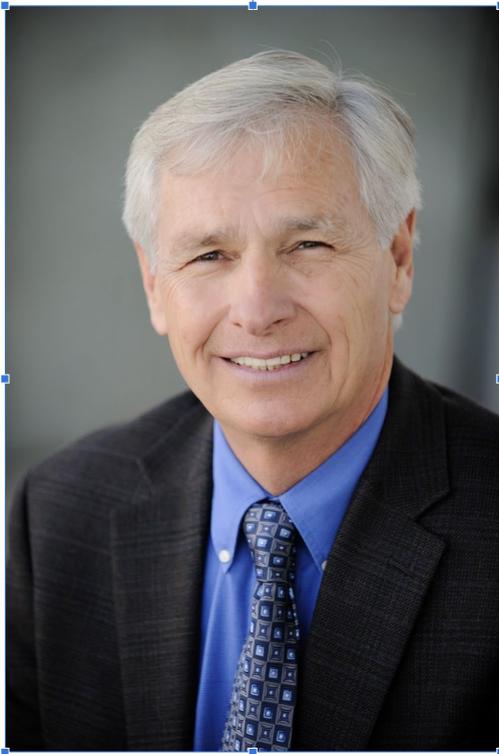
- 00:00 Genesis 37-41-- Part II Dr. Michael Wilcox
- 00:07 David E. Sorensen Conference Talk about forgiveness
- 04:16 Joseph doesn’t want servants, he wants brothers
- 07:53 Great hurt requires great forgiveness
- 09:59 Portia from *The Merchant of Venice* speech about forgiveness vs. vengeance
- 15:23 Pharoah states the purpose of all scripture
- 18:55 Patriarchal blessings to Jacob’s sons
- 23:21 Jacob dies and is “gathered to his people”
- 30:54 What if we are from tribes other than Ephraim?
- 35:51 Tears are a gift from God
- 37:19 Dr. Wilcox shares his thoughts about scholarship, faith, and his journey
- 46:48 End of Part II

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Biographical Information:



S. Michael Wilcox received his PhD from the University of Colorado and taught for many years at the LDS Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah. He has spoken to packed crowds at BYU Education Week and has hosted tours to the Holy Land and to Church history sites. He has served in a variety of callings, including as bishop and counselor in a stake presidency. He has written many articles and books, including *House of Glory*, *Sunset*, *10 Great Souls I Want to Meet in Heaven*, and *Finding Hope*. He and his late wife, Laurie, are the parents of five children.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:10	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you-
John Bytheway:	00:00:15	As together we followHIM.
Hank Smith:	00:00:20	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my dreamy co-host John Bytheway.
John Bytheway:	00:00:29	You saw me sleeping.
Hank Smith:	00:00:31	He sometimes nods off during our...
John Bytheway:	00:00:34	No, I'm agreeing. Yeah. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:00:36	Agreeing. Yeah. John, we're talking someone very dreamy in the Old Testament, but before we get started, I want to do a little shout out. I met Mark and Ashley Lyons. They live out in North Carolina. Ran into them when I was out East and they listen every week to the podcast. So Mark and Ashley, just want to say thank you for listening. It was really good to meet you. John, we are talking about Joseph of Egypt this week, or continuing our discussion from last week of Joseph of Egypt. And we have a familiar face here. Who's with us?
John Bytheway:	00:01:14	Oh, we're so glad to have Dr. S. Michael Wilcox back with us. And this is the third time, Hank. But I loved listening to brother Wilcox. And I have been so grateful for his teachings over the years. That book Don't Leap with the Sheep just gave me a new

way to try to teach what the scriptures teach. Really grateful for that. So he has a new book out called Holding On, really a timely book in the back of here. This is probably our most recent bio. S. Michael Wilcox received his PhD from the University of Colorado and taught for many years at the Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah.

- John Bytheway: 00:01:56 He has spoken to packed crowds at BYU Education Week, hosted tours to the Holy Land to China. In fact, my brother and sister-in-law went with Mike to China, just loved it. And to church history sites and beyond. He's also served in a variety of callings, including bishop and a counselor in a stake presidency, written many articles in books. He and his late wife Laurie are the parents of five children. And we're just really glad to have you back. I'm so looking forward to this.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:21 Thank you. 14 grandchildren now. Maybe one more.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:26 Congratulations.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:27 That's great.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:29 Yeah, Grandpa. Is it Grandpa Wilcox? Is that what they call you? Grandpa Mike?
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:33 Well, some of them call me Grandpa Tall-
- Hank Smith: 00:02:35 Grandpa Tall.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:36 ... because the other grandpa isn't as tall as I am.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:40 It's like, I'm the younger grandpa, the taller grandpa.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:44 That's right. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:45 We're very excited to have you. I'm sure everyone listening is as well. So, let's take a look at Genesis and come into this the way you want to.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:54 Okay. You know, there's just maybe two preliminary things. I hate to start with somebody that maybe nobody might be familiar with, but there's an English Christian apologetics, I call him the C.S. Lewis of the previous generation in a lot of ways, G. K. Chesterton. And he wrote a lot of beautiful things. And he maybe hit the nail on the head about the problem with modern society. It's interesting. It's 1905. So, what he's going to say in 1905 is probably even more critical in 2022.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:03:29 And he gives a description that I can't think of anybody who nails Joseph and many other characters of the Old Testament down quite so beautifully, and why it's worth the effort and time to study the Old Testament or any scripture. So this is what he says. "There is a great gap in modern ethics, the absence of vivid pictures of purity and spiritual triumph." And I'm going to finish this quote just a second. But if I had to say, what does the story of Joseph teach us or Ruth or Jonathan or Gideon or dozens of other, is that you and I get vivid pictures of purity and spiritual triumph. Story of Joseph is a story of spiritual triumph.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:04:36 Now he goes on, he says, "This absence of an enduring and positive ideal, this absence of a permanent key to virtue, I venture to point out with increased firmness does leave us face to face with the problem of a human consciousness filled with very definitive images of evil and with no or very little definitive image of good." People are pretty much aware of what is evil, but I'm not sure we discuss what is the good life, the true life, the right way to live, the best. I'm not sure people ask that question anymore. I'm not sure they think it has an answer.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:05:31 So you have in the Old Testament, these wonderful stories that fills in that absence. I understand what spiritual triumph is. I have a definitive view in a life of individuals of what goodness is, what true goodness is. I don't have to have long discussions about it or ethical rules, I just say, "See Joseph. This is it." So that's one thing that I would commence with, but I always think about with Joseph spiritual triumph. And Genesis ends with maybe the greatest spiritual triumph in the Book of Genesis.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:06:15 The second thing I think we need to understand about Joseph and Genesis is, the very first book of scripture that God gives, the first book that anybody was going to read, the book that's been around the longest, therefore we could assume has some of the most critical lessons for the human experience, is essentially a book about family. It's really the story of family relationships as if God is saying, "This is what I want you to get right." And so this is what we're going to start with. We're going to start with family.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:06:55 And I'm going to show you all the relationships and you'll see successes at it and you'll see failures at it and you'll see how people interact. And so you pick the stories. I have husband and wife relationships, right after the creation. That's the first thing we're introduced to. I have Adam and Eve. I have Abraham and Sarah, Abraham and Hagar, I have Rebekah and Isaac, Jacob, Rachel, and Leah, all these husband and wife. And I watch how they operate. I have parent-child. One of the great themes of

Genesis is a covenant wife is worth any effort to obtain. That's kind of the first theme. But I also have parent and child relationships.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:07:42 And nowhere do you sense the importance of that as greatly as Rachel's cry to Jacob, "Give me children or else I die. The blessing of children. And I watch Abraham and Isaac. I watch Jacob and Joseph, Jacob and his other children. I watch the parent-child interactions. Rebekah and Jacob. And then the last one is siblings. I have all the sibling relationships. Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael, Cain and Abel, and the greatest of all the sibling stories, Joseph and his brothers.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:08:22 And most of those sibling stories are stories of reconciliation. And they're beautiful because of that. And we'll talk about, I think, one of the two greatest messages of Joseph's life that has to do certainly with that theme of family. And almost whatever situation you might find yourself in, you'll probably find a family situation in Genesis. My mother raised me alone. She was a single mother raising children. Well, what story in Genesis is a single mother raising children, hoping God will help her?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:09:02 And for me, Hagar and Ishmael is a profoundly beautiful story for all single mothers out there. There's that wonderful story of a desperate mother, water spent in the bottle, puts Ishmael under the bush, but Ishmael's name means God hears, and God hears them. And she takes care of him. And as a child, that story, and growing up, just the sentence "And God was with the lad" was a powerful story. Hope for my mother.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:09:40 So as you go through, and you probably talked about some of these things already with people, but I just like to highlight the importance of all those relationships that the Book of Genesis is trying to help us understand.

Hank Smith: 00:09:55 I remember you once talking about your dad even. The long time it took for you to understand your dad. It was years ago that you told that story, but it was...

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:10:06 I may reference that today because there is a principle in Joseph's life that I learned in my relationship with my father.

Hank Smith: 00:10:14 Yeah, yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:10:15 That maybe will be helpful for people.

Hank Smith: 00:10:17 Okay. Yeah.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:10:17 So those are kind of the two, the family theme and spiritual triumph, our need to see. I break Joseph down when I teach it into seven or eight truths, principles, life applications, whatever you want to call them, the scriptures need to be relevant, so that I try and capture just in a phrase or a sentence. So maybe I just go through some of those and we'll look at it. Most people know the story very well. So I don't know that we need to go through it quite chronologically. But, when making decisions, think of their long term impact on others, even those not yet born.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:11:06 When does Joseph's problem start? When does this family become, in a modern term, somewhat dysfunctional? Jacob's family is a somewhat dysfunctional family. Who starts the problem with Joseph and his brothers? It has not started when he gets the coat of many colors. It started by Laban. Grandpa starts the problems. And how does grandpa start the problems? Grandpa sneaks Leah into the wedding bed when Jacob is expecting Rachel, and that sets up a conflict that Joseph and his brothers will grow up in this family tension.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:11:55 Names in Genesis are really critical. So you always look at the name. Often the name of the child carries the message of the story. We'll look at that with Ephraim and Manasseh. So as Rachel, she is married to Jacob a week later. He works 14 years, but he doesn't wait another seven years. Rachel is in childbearing years and no father and the culture of the time is going to say, "Well, let's wait another seven years when you could be having children."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:12:26 So Rachel's probably a young girl when Jacob meets her, maybe 10, 11. And they marry. And then we start, what I call, the baby derby. This competition. Again, it's family. Okay? Competition between Rachel and Leah, who can produce the sons and the children for Jacob. And Leah, the score at the end of chapter 29 is four to nothing, Leah. But what is the critical part about that is the meaning of the names. So Reuben means 'look, a son.' Who is she saying that to? She's saying that to Jacob, and in a sense, a little bit of in your face to Rachel.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:13:15 And then this poignant phrase, "Now, therefore, my husband will love me." Well, you can't help but feel that. Simeon means to hear. God heard I was hated. Levi means to join. And Leah says, "Now, will my husband be joined unto me?" Judah means praise. I will praise the Lord. Now those boys grow up with those names. What impact do you think that had, especially in a society where the meaning of the name was critical. And this is when Rachel says, "Give me children or else I die." And she gives

Bilhah and Dan comes, which means to judge. God has judged and also heard my voice.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:14:04 Naphtali is an interesting one. Naphtali means to wrestle. And Rachel says, "With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister." Now, you're a little boy growing up in this conflict, this tension that Jacob didn't ask for, Rachel didn't ask for, grandpa started it. I guess Leah could have whispered on the night, "Hey, Jacob, it's me, Leah," and stopped it. She could have stopped the consummation. She doesn't.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:14:40 Leah counters the baby derby with Zilpah, giving her maid to Jacob. And now you have the first son. And what does Leah say? She calls his name Gad, which means a troop. Oh, this isn't in your face name, because she says a troop coming. Okay. The score is four to two, Rachel, I have a troop coming. I'm going to have a whole football team when I'm done with this thing. Okay? Anyway, you get the picture. It continues that way.
- Hank Smith: 00:15:10 Then Asher.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:15:11 Asher, which is happy. Asher got a good name.
- Hank Smith: 00:15:16 Six to two.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:15:17 Yeah. Six to two. Okay? Then Leah... You have the little mandrake story. And again, this isn't what we're talking about, so we'll pass it by. But Leah has another son called Issachar, which she kind of hired by giving her mandrakes to Rachel. And Issachar means there's a recompense. Zebulun means to dwell. And Leah says, "Now, will my husband dwell with me?" And finally, Rachel has Joseph, and then Benjamin. And she dies.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:15:53 Now, in the legal understanding of the day, who is the first wife of Jacob? Legally, who's the first wife? Leah. She's married one week before Rachel. Therefore, legally, culturally, the accepted norms of their society, who's the first-born son that carries the birthright, the double portion and the leadership when Jacob dies? Who would that be?
- John Bytheway: 00:16:25 Reuben.
- Hank Smith: 00:16:26 That'd be Reuben.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:16:27 That'd be Reuben. Leah's first-born son. Joseph is number what?

Hank Smith: 00:16:32 He's down the line.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:16:34 He's 11. Even Dinah is older than Joseph. Okay? The daughter. But Jacob feels that is not fair to Rachel. So in Jacob's mind, who is the first wife?

Hank Smith: 00:16:49 Rachel.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:16:49 Rachel is. Therefore in Jacob's mind, who is the first born son that carries the birthright.

Hank Smith: 00:16:58 Joseph.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:16:59 Joseph. Yes. But that doesn't go down good with the family. So Laban causes the problem. That's where the conflict starts. And so I say the first great message of Joseph's life is given before he is ever born. It's a lesson for all of us who think, "I'm only hurting myself. It's my life. I can do what I want with it." Who're thinking the more immediate nows instead of the long term. And so I say to all of us, to myself, when making decisions, think of a long term impact on others those decisions are going to have, especially even those not yet born. So that's the first great takeaway.

Hank Smith: 00:17:45 Elder Holland gave a talk called A Prayer for the Children, in which he said, "Sometimes we write checks that come out of our grandchildren's pockets in far greater ways than we ever intended."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:17:57 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:17:58 Wasn't it you, Mike, that talked about the cattle that would push against the fence.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:18:03 Right. Yeah. Don't lick grass. The cows that weakened the fence when I was a boy at the ranch, made holes in the fence, broke the post. The cows never strayed through the fence, but the calves did. The calves went through the holes that the cows made. That's a critical thing to understand. There's an Old Testament phrase that explains it really well. "The parents have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." So when you eat something sour, it makes your teeth tingle. And he's saying the parents ate the grapes, but the kids pay the consequences.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:18:43 So I don't blame totally Joseph. Joseph is a little tactless. Maybe he's a kid. We go further into the story. I think he's probably

hoping that his dreams maybe would be helpful in cementing his position. Jacob doesn't give him the coat of many colors because I love him better, he gives him the coat as an outward physical symbol that I consider Joseph the first-born son of the first wife. And we're told that his brothers hated him. Couldn't speak peaceably to him. This is, like I say, a dysfunctional family in many ways.

- Hank Smith: 00:19:21 It's a very real family. I can't imagine any families today having problems like this. Right?
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:19:27 Yeah. And you have the simile relationships. Again, Genesis is to teach us about families and how to handle things. Sarah and Hagar have a little spat. Hagar is a little insensitive to Sarah's longing for a child and she gets a little uppity, and Sarah doesn't react too well to that. She deals hardly with her. I can remember saying a phrase to Laurie that we had in our relationship that could diffuse situations because there was a little humor to it. And I would say, "Laurie, I was insensitive, and you overreacted." And that's a very good description of a lot of relationships in families.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:20:11 We could say Hagar was insensitive and Sarah overreacted. So, they have to come to reconciliation and Hagar does, she goes back and the Lord asks her a question. "How did you get here? How did you get here?" Think of what caused the crisis and you'll recognize it. It's part of your fault.
- Hank Smith: 00:20:33 I was insensitive, and you overreacted.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:20:36 That's right. I was insensitive. And that's a standard. You see it in a lot of stories. But you certainly see it in Sarah and Hagar, all these relationships in Genesis. Somebody asked me, "Could you recommend a good book on how to have good family relationships?" I'd say, "Oh, sure. Read Genesis with that question in mind and look at all the relationships, husband-wife, parent-child, siblings, Abraham and Lot. You even have an uncle-nephew. You've got all the relationships and you just look at them."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:21:09 This is God's first message he really wants us to understand, how to operate in these families. And he doesn't show us perfect families. These families have challenges as part of the beauty of it. But arising out of it, you get these spiritual triumphs, Esau and Jacob embracing, that's as good as the prodigal son. And nothing is better than the prodigal son.

Hank Smith: 00:21:35 Yeah. I would say when I've read Joseph first as a kid, I thought, the things he says, he's not making any friends by saying some of these things.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:21:42 Right. Yeah. He's...

John Bytheway: 00:21:44 Can you keep your dreams to yourself?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:21:47 Yeah. But he's young. We don't know, he's 17 when he's sold. And we don't know when, was he 14 when he got a dream? How many 14-year-olds have a lot of discretion.

Hank Smith: 00:21:59 Right?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:22:00 15-year-olds. Yeah. Maybe he wanted to help the matter. I don't know. We'll talk about how those dreams get fulfilled, certainly much different than I think any of them realized. It was not a negative fulfillment, but a very positive fulfillment. So, the second truth, we won't spend much time on it because it really happens before chapter 42, which we'll get into. And that is, if you find yourself living the unexpected life, make the best of it. And don't get mad at God.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:22:33 Joseph really teaches that. He never expected to end up sold into slavery and then accused by Potiphar. You would've covered all that last week. This is an unexpected life that doesn't turn out the way he dreamed it, if we can say it that way. And sometimes when the unexpected life hits us, we can get mad. Now Joseph never gets mad at God and God brings him through. He makes the best of that life. And eventually after 13 years of not so good, he's age 30 when he stands before Pharaoh, we're told that. So that's 13 years. And then things change.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:23:21 But it's so easy to get mad at God, to what I call, jump off the pinnacle. That's that second temptation of Jesus that used to bewilder me. How in the world was that a temptation? I'm going to jump off a cliff or a high building? No way. What do you think, I'm stupid? But the temptation was, prove God cares for you and will protect you and shield you from stubbing your toe. And Jesus's answer is I don't need to prove that. I won't tempt God.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:23:52 And that story, you get that story... well, that comes from in Exodus a little bit later. So, I think Joseph never jumps off the tower. He's living an unexpected life, but he makes the best of it. And he doesn't get mad at God.

Hank Smith: 00:24:07 Both of my sisters became single mothers. And that was never the expectation. That was never the hope. That was not the dream. They have done incredible things with their situation.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:24:19 Yeah. And they have Hagar and Ishmael as a beautiful example to say God will be with your children. God was with the lad. God was with me growing up.

Hank Smith: 00:24:31 I tell my sisters, they remind me of Joseph. They were handed a bad situation. Joseph to me is the epitome of keep at it.

John Bytheway: 00:24:39 Right.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:24:40 Right. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:24:41 Keep at it. Do what you can with what you've been given. And one day, your day will come.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:24:47 And the reason that we can believe that is the third principle, the one that is one of the two major, major truths that Joseph's life teaches. And it's such an important one that it's taught in all scriptures, multiple times. And I would state it this way. "God can turn all negatives into positives." Drawing on the meaning of Joseph's two sons names. "God can turn all negatives into positives, and make us fruitful even in the land of our afflictions."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:25:28 So just before we get into 42 and everything's reversed for Joseph. He interprets Pharaoh's dreams. He marries Asenath and he has two sons. In Genesis 41, 51 and 52, he names the sons. And remember, names in Genesis are real important. They carry the message. Isaac means to laugh or rejoice. And the message of that story is, at the end of a long painful waiting for God to fulfill his promises to you, you get Isaac. You get laughter. You get rejoicing.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:26:08 Abraham had two tests, not one. He had a lot. I think the most difficult test of Abraham was waiting decades for God to fulfill his promises. If a sacrifice of Isaac was an intensity of tests, the other test was an enduring test. For decades, they waited for that promise to be fulfilled. But God finally does. So here's Joseph in 51, he called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. Now what is the meaning of Manasseh? Manasseh means to forget. "For God," said, "He has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." I mean, he's forgot them. He's forgot the pain that happened there.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:26:54 And the name of the second called he Ephraim, "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." Ephraim means fruitful or double fruit. So, the names of those boys, I can't say it better. We're going to look at how it's repeated in the chapters that we're going into. I can't think of a better way of saying it than God will make you fruitful in the land of your afflictions. That's the message with Joseph's life. If life sends you a negative, which life does, God brings the vertical line down and gives you the positive to make the negative positive.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:27:36 And that is why life is fair. That is why we don't complain. Because ultimately, it's going to all be positive. Levi says that to his son, Jacob, "You know the greatness of God. He will consecrate all thine afflictions for thy gain. God's greatness is in his ability to turn negatives into positives." Joseph and Liberty Jail is the ultimate one, that all these things will give the experience to be for thy good. Paul and Romans. We know that all things work together for good to those that love God.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:28:08 And in the Old Testament, it is Joseph. It is his story above all. And it's stated in the naming of his children. Now, I'm going to just skip over to chapter 45, which is one of the high points in Genesis when Joseph tells his brothers who he is. And I'll come back to that. But we go to chapter 45. Notice, because he understands that principle, Joseph through his life has been taught the principle, 'God makes negatives positive,' He can forgive his brothers and have reconciliation because he knows that I've been fruitful in the land of my afflictions. I forget the bad.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:28:55 Here in verse five, he says, "Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me here; for God did send me before you to preserve life." That's very gracious of Joseph. Verse seven, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance." Verse eight, "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Now that's not quite true. Okay?
- Hank Smith: 00:29:33 They're like, "I was there. I remember."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:29:36 Yeah, because we also learned that Joseph begged his brothers not to do that. He hears them speaking about that. Let me give you one more place where that principle is taught. Jacob says it, "You want a life that faced a lot of adversity, you look at Jacob." Alienated from his family. Cheated by Laban. Married to a woman that he never wanted to be married to. His beloved Rachel dies young. He thinks Joseph is dead. The behavior of some of his other sons in Genesis isn't the most sterling. Levi

and Simeon slaughter at town over Dinah's rape, and Reuben defiles Bilhah. There's an interesting, that's a little off the subject, but again, about family and Laban's influence in the Book of Jasher, which tells the Genesis stories. We're given the reason why Reuben defiles Bilhah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:30:33

In Genesis, Rachel dies. And the very next verse after her burial is Reuben goes into Bilhah and defiles her. And you say, "What? What is this all about?" But in Book of Jasher, Jacob removes his abode into Bilhah's tent as the main place of his residence. And remember how bad Leah wanted Jacob to dwell with her, and to live with here and to love her. And these sons can see this. Jacob moves into Bilhah's tent, which is an affront to Leah. And so Reuben defiles her to force his father into his mother's tent.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:31:18

Boy, that's a point. If that is true and there's a certain legitimacy to that element of the story that fits, then that's tragic for Reuben and that's tragic for Leah and that's tragic for Jacob and for everybody involved. When Reuben gets his patriarchal blessing at the end of Genesis, that episode is referred to by Jacob. So you come back to that, be careful that your decisions don't impact really, really badly your children. Not that they don't have agency and that they couldn't handle things better, but a lot of pressure's been placed on this family.

John Bytheway: 00:31:57

Can you tell our audience about the Book of Jasher and what that is?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:32:01

Well, there's a lot of apocrypha, you might call them. They're called pseudepigrapha. Right? Pseude-pretended-pigrapha signature. So, you have both Old and New Testament. Other books never made the cannon. There's some books in the Catholic Bible that made the cannon that didn't make it in the Protestant Bible that we use. So, you read those books with the same spirit that Joseph Smith was told by God in section 91 of the Doctrine and Covenants to read the apocrypha when he asked, "Should I retranslate this?" And the Lord says, "No, you don't need to. Let people read it with the spirit and they'll benefit from it."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:32:39

So there's all kinds of other gospels and other writings. And there's other Old Testament books that, in order to give them authority, sometimes you gave them a name that made them sound more-

Hank Smith:

00:32:52

Not really the author.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:32:53 Yeah. Not really the author. Pseudepigrapha.

John Bytheway: 00:32:54 That's a pseudo.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:32:55 A pretended pseudo. Okay. So the Book of Jasher has a lot of those stories. There are stories about one of the sons of Jacob picking up a one-ton rock and throwing it at his enemies. And you're saying, "Ah, yeah, this is kind of a little bit of heroic exaggeration." You're going to get a little of that heroic exaggeration in stories like David and Goliath. Okay? It's the way you tell stories in an ancient time.

Hank Smith: 00:33:23 That'd be a good title of my autobiography, I think. Heroic exaggeration.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:33:28 Heroic exaggeration. Yeah. But there's also stories in those that, you read them and you say, there is some truth in this. I don't have to say thus it was, but when I read that about Reuben, I say, "Boy, that really-

Hank Smith: 00:33:46 It rings true.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:33:48 ... there's something about that." So anyway, we go to chapter 48. Jacob is going to bless Joseph's children now. This is when he switches the hands, because he's going to give Ephraim the blessing. But notice what Jacob says to continue to emphasize this theme that God turns negatives to positives and can make us forget our toil and make us fruitful in the land of our afflictions. Verse 15, he blessed Joseph and said, "God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day." I mean, he's not feeling sorry for the tough life he's lived. "The angel which redeemed me from all evil."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:34:43 And that's the theme. There's the theme again. You see the theme in the naming of the sons. You see it in Joseph's words to his brothers. God sent me here, not you. And you see it in Jacob coming to the end of his life, looking back on his life and realizing, "God, redeem me from all the evil that came into my life. I have no complaints. Life has been fair and good to me in spite of the challenges that I lived." So that's a powerful truth of Genesis. It's one of the major principles of truth that Joseph's life is teaching us.

Hank Smith: 00:35:23 Reminds me of 1 Nephi 1:1. He starts right out with, "I've seen many afflictions, but I feel highly favored of the Lord." Right?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:35:34 I'm even grateful for my sins. And when I say that, people say, oh. And I always like to say, "Well, I didn't do a lot of really big ones." Okay? But none of us are going to get through life without making some mistakes and some things that cause often some real heart wrenching memory, that we could have handled things better. William Faulkner once said, "For those to whom sin is just a word, forgiveness is just a word also."

John Bytheway: 00:36:02 Wow. That's crazy.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:36:04 So even the mistakes I made in my life that caused me grief, God says, "We'll bring good out of that. You'll learn humility and empathy and compassion and mercy and understand, you'll be less likely to judge and condemn and criticize other people. And that's a good thing to come out of it.

John Bytheway: 00:36:24 I like that phrase in Moses 6, "They taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good." And oh, I don't go there again. That was horrible. And in that way, you got a taste of opposition and all things and you know, I don't want to go there again.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:36:41 Yeah. That's true. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:36:43 "He fed me all my life," Jacob says, "He shepherded me."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:36:48 Yeah, he did.

Hank Smith: 00:36:50 That's a beautiful one.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:36:52 And it's at the end of his life.

Hank Smith: 00:36:55 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:36:55 He's looking back. And you got to look at that statement in light of all that's happened to Jacob, because Jacob did not have an easy life. He had a child... Now you'd say, "Well, some of them maybe came from himself." Well, that's true of all of us. So now that we're on Jacob, let's go back to chapter 42. There's a kind of a corollary. This is my next truth from the life of Joseph and this last part of the Genesis. And I say it this way, "Things that appear to be against you, may in reality be blessings." They may be for you. Just the opposite of what you perceive.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:37:45 42, there's famine in the land now. It's 20 years later since they sold him, because he's 17 when they sell him, he's 30 when he stands before Pharaoh, there are seven years of harvest. We're in the famine years now. And so Jacob says... It's a nice mini

point. "Why do you stand here looking at each other?" Do something. Okay? Sometimes when problems come, we just stand around looking at each other.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:38:15 So that's 42:1. That's, "Why do you look one upon another?" In other words, everybody's waiting for somebody else to solve the problem. And my mind reels with sarcastic comments about political institutions, et cetera, and so forth.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:34 Don't just stand there.
- Hank Smith: 00:38:34 Everyone's just standing.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:38:36 Everybody just stands around stares and nobody does anything. "So, we don't want to stand around. So, there is a solution. Go down in Egypt and buy corn or grain." So, they go down, and they don't recognize Joseph, but he recognizes them. They bow down before him, which is a fulfillment of his dream, but it's not the important fulfillment. The important fulfillment is not a groveling bowing. The important fulfillment is a gratitude bowing, which is the fulfillment of that.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:39:07 Verse 21. What is Joseph wondering? Who's not there? Benjamin's not there. Well, dear Joseph, the last you saw of your brothers, they were exchanging you for silver. Why? Because of this conflict in the family started all the way back with Laban. So Rachel has one last child. What is a natural assumption for Joseph to make when, here comes the 10 brothers and Benjamin's not there? What's his natural assumption.
- John Bytheway: 00:39:39 Did you sell Benjamin too? Where is he?
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:39:41 Yeah. Where's Benjamin? So, he wants to find that out. Now they tell him he is alive. He's still up there with his father. And then you begin to see the spiritual triumph of Joseph in verse 21. He can hear them. Joseph says, "You go carry the corn back to fam- and save your families, but bring your younger brother next time you come," because he knows this is going to last for seven years, six more years, and they'll be back. Okay? They'll be back. He knows that. He listens to them because he can understand their language. They said in verse 21, they said one to another, "We are very guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." This is 20, 21, 22 years, they are still guilty.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:40:42 You want to see the power of guilt in a person's life, you see it in what the brothers say. And now Joseph learned something about his brothers, about Reuben. Reuben answer them, "Spake I not unto you, saying, do not sin against the child; and you would not hear? Therefore, behold, also his blood is required." They knew not that Joseph understood them. What does Joseph now know about his oldest brother? He wasn't part of it. And that is why, which brother does he remain as a slave or in captivity in Egypt? The second oldest brother, Simeon. Okay?
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:41:22 He sends Reuben back. You get a lot of... This is human nature. He sends Reuben back with the others and keeps Simeon. But his attitude is already forgiveness. Verse 24. Joseph says, "Oh, I'm getting a little of my own, but I'm glad you guys are writhing in guilt all these 20 years." No, it's one of the many weepings of Joseph. Count the weepings of Joseph when you go through there. Turned himself about them and wept. It's not, "Ah, I get a little of my own back." He feels for them. And he can feel for them... We're going to get to that principle about forgiveness. But I want to do this other one with Jacob.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:13 Sometimes we think, "Oh, so and so got away with murder. They got away with it." But 22 years of having that memory of your brother, what, in his anguish of his soul begging you not to do this, or remembering that.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:42:28 It's not going to end here. They're going to carry it right to Genesis 50. Right to the very end, they're going to carry that guilt and that agony. They're going to have that... We'll talk about that when we get there too. Anyway, he takes Simeon and sends them back and he puts the money back. He doesn't want lack of money to stop them from coming back. So they go back and now we get this principle, "Things that appear to be against you, may in reality be blessings."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:42:58 So look at 42:36. They come back to Jacob and they tell him what happened. That we don't get to go back down without Benjamin. And Jacob, their father said under them, "Me have you bereaved of my children. Joseph is not." Now pause. Is that true? Is Joseph not?
- John Bytheway: 00:43:24 He's still around.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:43:26 He's still alive and in a good position. But Jacob doesn't know that. "And Simeon is not." Is that true?
- John Bytheway: 00:43:36 No.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:43:38 No. Simeon's still alive.

Hank Smith: 00:43:39 Simeon's going to be fine. Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:43:41 "And you will take Benjamin away."

John Bytheway: 00:43:43 Why did you mention that?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:43:45 Is that true? No. He's made three statements that appear to be true in his life situation, but none of them are. And then he says, as he thinks of being bereaved of his children, "All these things are against me." Now, is that true? No. All of these things are working for him. He just doesn't understand they're working for him. And that's one of the reasons, at the end, he can say, "God redeem me from all the evil of my life."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:44:20 He's going to give them with the cup in Benjamin's sack. The Benjamin Calypso from Joseph the Technicolor Dreamcoat. He's going to give the brothers a gift. And it's a gift of knowing I would not repeat the mistake of my youth. Given the opportunity to repeat the mistake, I would not do it again. And that's a great gift he gives them.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:44:53 So they take Benjamin and they go back. And now we're two... I think the second of the two big truths of Joseph's life. One, God will make all negatives positive. The other is, deals with family, and this is such a hard one for people sometimes. And I say it this way, "When someone sins against you, or when someone hurts you, forgive them, especially if they are members of your family." And that is a great theme through Genesis. If somebody hurts you or sins against you, forgive them, especially if they're members of your family. And there's a corollary-

Hank Smith: 00:45:43 That is so hard, Mike.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:45:44 Oh my gosh, that's hard.

Hank Smith: 00:45:45 I can see right when you say, every time you bring it up, people probably think, "Ah."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:45:50 Well, every time I bring it up... When I do Israel and Egypt, I teach Joseph on the Nile. We're floating down the Nile in Joseph's world and I teach it. I have yet to do a trip where somebody on, out of those 85 or so people that are with me, after I've talked about that, comes up and they talk about family difficulties. Now, there's always corollaries and exceptions, and

I'm going to deal with that in, what I call, the coming near principle.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:46:22 That doesn't always mean that you allow toxic relationships and harmful and hurtful relationships to continue in forgiveness. Okay? It is the beautiful element in this story. Families will need to forgive each other. And rarely do I hear a story from a family that I think is out of the range of the Joseph story, where I would say, "Yeah, I don't know that you should continue that relationship."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:46:51 A lot of them are about money and inheritances and business divisions, and people put their grievances ahead of the relationship. And Joseph won't do that. Well, they come again in 43 and we get our second weeping Joseph when he sees Benjamin. 43:36, "Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber and wept there, and washed his face and went out; and refrained himself and set on bread; and then he lines them all up in order of their birth, which makes them a little bit nervous."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:47:39 And now we get to 44 and they're going to send them back with the food, and he puts the silver cup in Benjamin's bag. Now, again, what's the purpose of this. He wants to know if they really are true men. That's what they said. They said, we're true men. He's going to give them a great opportunity to redeem themselves in their own eyes and in his, and in Jacobs. Or a great opportunity to get rid of the last of Rachel's sons, the last obstacle.

Hank Smith: 00:48:20 Yeah. Have you changed? Are you still the same?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:48:22 That's what he's going to give them the chance to do. And Judah gives that beautiful speech starting in verse 16, take the time to go through. It's a beautiful speech where Judah acknowledges, painful maybe, "I gave assurances to my father I bring Benjamin back, because the life of my father is tied up in this youngest child. Take me instead." That's maybe a hard thing to say. "If I don't go back, my father will be grieved. He was grieved when Simeon didn't. But it won't kill him. But if Benjamin doesn't go, you'll bring the gray hairs on my father down to the grave. He'll never recover from it."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:49:11 So it's such a beautiful pleading. And Joseph can't help but respond to Judah. Judah's different. They've changed. They're different people. And so, 45, "Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, cause every

man to go out from me." "And there stood no man while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren, and he wept a lot." Probably for the first time, he doesn't have to go hide somewhere. He weeps in front of them. And you can imagine what they're thinking. Here's this brave man. Our lives are in his hand and he is weeping.

- Hank Smith: 00:49:58 And he sent all the Egyptians away.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:49:59 Sends everybody away.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:01 How are you going to talk to us? Yeah, the translators.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:50:03 It is always nice to put yourself in the position of everybody in a scriptural story. And verse three, Joseph said unto his brethren, "I am Joseph; does my father yet live?" He still isn't sure they've really been talking true to him. "And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence." I should think they would be.
- John Bytheway: 00:50:26 Yeah. What just happened?
- Hank Smith: 00:50:29 I always call that shut the front tent flap.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:50:31 Yeah. Wow.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:35 That's a wow moment in life.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:50:36 They weren't expecting that. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I think, four of the most beautiful words in Genesis, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt." And then those gracious words we looked at earlier, "Don't be grieved or angry with yourselves. I know you are because I overheard you talking about it. But I don't want you to. I want you to see God's made it all good and there's a purpose in it. And I'm okay. I'm fine."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:51:22 "My oldest granddaughter is adopted and she's 22, married now. And she wanted to see her birth mother, a young woman who got pregnant and could have aborted my granddaughter, didn't, and she's born, and I have this beautiful, beautiful, lovely young woman in my family. And she wanted to tell her birth mother 'thank you for giving me birth' and to say to her 'I'm okay. Everything turned out all right. I'm okay. I'm a strong member of the church. I've been married in the temple. I have a

wonderful husband. I'm okay. Everything turned out all right."
And that's what Joseph was doing with his brothers.

- John Bytheway: 00:52:20 The theme that the church has chosen for the youth this year is the Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. And I just love how this parallels that what you have been saying is that, with time, all these things... I mean, Joseph resists Potiphar's wife and what does he get for that? More time in prison. And here's another thing, what was the way, "Things that appear to be against you may be blessings."
- John Bytheway: 00:52:54 And those verses in 45:5, 6, and 7, God did this. And as you said, he turned a bad thing... Actually, they did it. Those brothers did it. But he turned that bad thing into something good. And Joseph continued to trust the Lord.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:53:10 Yeah. There is-- I actually brought it-- You can see how beat up my Great Divorce is by C.S. Lewis. People maybe don't know who Chesterton was, but they certainly know who C.S. Lewis was. And in The Great Divorce, C.S. Lewis' mentor was a congregational minister named George McDonald. And he escorts Lewis on this trip in The Great Divorce.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:53:41 And he says, "Son, you cannot, in your present state, understand eternity, but you can get some likeness of it if you say that both good and evil, when they are full grown, are retrospective. All this earthly past will have been heaven to those who are saved. All their life on earth too, will be seen by the damned to have been hell. That is what mortals misunderstand. They say of some temporal suffering 'no future bliss can make up for it,' not knowing that heaven, once attained, will work backwards and turn even that agony into a glory. Or they say of some sinful pleasure, 'Let me have but this, and I will take the consequences,' little dreaming how damnation will spread back and back into their past and contaminate the pleasure of them. Both processes begin even before death."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:54:53 "The good man's past begins to change so that his forgiven sins and remembered sorrows take on the quality of heaven. And the bad man's past already conforms to his badness and is filled only with dreariness. And that is why at the end of all things, when the sun rises here in heaven and the twilight turns to blackness down there, the blessed will say, 'We have never lived anywhere except in heaven.' And the lost, 'We were always in hell.' And both will speak truth. And the saved, what happens to them is best described as the opposite of a mirage. What seemed, when they entered it, to be the vale of misery, turns

out, when they look back, to have been a well; and where present experience saw only salt deserts, memory truthfully records that the pools were full of water."

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:55:51 And that's Joseph. He understands it. And because he understands it, he can forgive. He can forgive fully, and he can initiate, what I call, the coming near. And so as another principle, if you want, I say it this way, "If possible, invite or initiate the coming near."
- Hank Smith: 00:56:21 Reconciliation.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:56:22 It's a reconciliation. It's not just forgiveness, but it's a restructuring of the relationship that has been damaged or wounded. And that's why I like verse four, Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. We go to verse 10 of Genesis 45. He's telling, "Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:56:59 You see that same thing if we go back to Jacob and Esau, the other really beautiful forgiveness story, when he comes back. Look at the wording in Genesis 33, as Jacob terrified that Esau is going to kill him and his family, still angry. But Esau, bless his heart. What a good example. He's not coming to kill his race. He's coming to greet him and welcome him because Esau is over it. Jacob doesn't know that. He thinks things are going to turn out bad.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:57:41 So Genesis 33:3, "He passed over before them," Jacob, "and bowed himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother." And then he brings the family, verse 6. "Then the handmaids came near, they and their children, they bow themselves. And Leah also with her children came near and bowed themselves. And after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves." Joseph has seen in his younger life, and all the brothers, a beautiful example of family reconciliation, sibling forgiveness and a coming near.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:58:28 What's the most beautiful forgiveness story in all scripture? I think it's the pinnacle of all stories, and it's a fictional story. It's told by Jesus.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:38 The Prodigal Son.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:58:39 Yeah. The Prodigal Son. What's the verse that initiates Luke chapter 15? Who is he telling that prodigal to? We get a little

distracted in thinking Jesus is telling the Prodigal Son for the hearing of the Pharisees. He's telling the Prodigal Son for the hearing of the prodigals. He's telling the Prodigal Son for the hearing of the publicans and the sinners. So, Luke 15 verse one begins, "Then drew near all the publicans and sinners for to hear him."

- Hank Smith: 00:59:11 To hear.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:59:14 There is just something beautiful in the coming near if I can do it. You mentioned my father. My father left the family, if I can give an example of it. When I was a child, when I was a baby, there were problems in his life and challenges. My mother never really spoke negatively of my father, but he had nothing to do with my raising. Nothing. Now, when I was a little bit older, and as a student at BYU, I began to initiate a little bit of interaction with my father. My father was not a bad man, he was a weak man, in some ways. He had challenges in his life that he just couldn't overcome, which led to his abandon in the family.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:00:00 So I've talked about forgiveness. You're 14 and you want to forgive your father for this. You want to be at peace concerning it. And you pray for it and nothing comes. And there's a principle in life, "Sometimes life has to create a holding place in your heart for God to put the answers." So, I'm not getting answers. God's not helping me reconcile with my father because I don't have a holding place to put the answer that I need. Life will have to create it. And so, I've told the story a lot for people.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:00:40 18, 19, you're praying, "Let me be at peace, concerning my relationship with my father and what happened in the past." And no answer. Nothing. I go on a mission. I got married. I had two daughters. Finally, I had two boys. My two older sons, and one was six and one was two. And I was preparing to talk on families. And I was going to talk about my mother. My mother was my Hagar. Only worried about me. We were a Hagar Ishmael family.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:01:23 And I was going to talk about my mother. But the spirit said, "Talk about your father." And I'm thinking, "What am I going to say about my father? My father was not a part of my life."
- Hank Smith: 01:01:35 I don't even...

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:01:36 But it caused me to think about my father. And just then my two sons came into the room and my mind was just filled by the spirit of all the happy things I'd shared with those two boys. Simple things, piggyback rides and walks by the pond and blowing out birthday candles and carving Halloween pumpkins, trick or treat, and Christmas morning, their first talk, listening to their prayers, all those. And I love those boys. I looked at those two boys and I just thought what a wonderful thing it is to be a father and to have boys.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:02:09 I'm not trying to be a sexist. I loved my daughters. I had wonderful memories of my daughters. But for the answer to fit enough for forgiveness to come, I had to have sons and have memories with those sons. And now, I have a place for God to put the answer. Now, I get to forget all my toil and realize that I could be fruitful. And the Lord said, "Now that you are a father, now that you know a father's love and a father's joy, would you be the son who lost his father or the father who lost his son?"

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:02:49 And I wept, just like Joseph. I wept and wept and wept. Not for me. I wept for my father. I knew the tragedy of my father's life. I knew what he missed. And the easiest thing in the world for me to forgive was my father. And I think when Joseph listens to his brothers and he understands, it is not hard for him to forgive them. But there's more. Then the spirit begins to say, "Now, you need to initiate the coming near."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:03:28 My father could not be a father and have those joys, but he could be a grandfather, and know a grandfather's joys. And so, my wife and I, we involved my father in everything we could. He blew out birthday candles with his grandchildren and went to Christmas mornings with his grandchildren and trick or treating with his grandchildren and listen to them pray and listen to their talk.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:04:00 We tried to say, "Come near to me." And one of the best things I ever did in life was not just to forgive my father. That would've been enough, but God knew there was better and wonderful things coming. One of the best things I did in life was to say to my father, "Come near unto me. Come near unto me. Be near unto me."

Hank Smith: 01:04:31 And you're right, Mike, it's not a reconciliation how things were, it's a restructure-

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:04:36 It is. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 01:04:37 ... after a wound.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:04:40 And I love Joseph for that. Now it's not always possible to initiate the coming near. I think that God wants the forgiveness. And the forgiveness comes when we realize that he can make up for him. And notice that when he names Manasseh, the word is forget. There's a power in God we see in his forgiveness. Jeremiah 31 speaks of it. The Doctrine and Covenants speaks of it, but we get it in Jeremiah 31 when the Lord says, "I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:05:23 I think we need to take God at his word. We worship a forgiving god. We also worship a forgetting God. There is forgetting in the forgiveness. Now I know God's omniscient. I don't want to question his omniscience, but I can hear God say to me, "My omniscience, Mike, has no desire to remember every folly and every mistake and every sin that you ever made. I don't want to remember those. Would you take me on my word, when I say I forget them, I forget them. I remember them no more." And that's a high-high level of forgiveness.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:06:07 I don't know if Joseph gets there in life, but I like that Manasseh has caused me to forget all my toil. There comes a point when we need to forget, and God does. I truly believe his omniscience has no desire to remember the sins of men. And I need to get to where I can do that with others and myself.

Hank Smith: 01:06:37 Yeah. Is that what Jesus meant, maybe, with remember Lot's wife. She just turned around, right? She's looking backwards.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:06:44 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 01:06:44 Don't look backwards. Look forwards. Forget.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:06:48 Yeah. If we can. Now, if I had thought my father would've been dangerous to my children, if there had been a toxic relationship or had been harmful, I could not have initiated or invited the coming near, but my father was not going to harm me. Or some people may be in abusive situations where you can't invite the coming near. But as much as you can invite the coming near, I think that is a mature level of forgiveness that Joseph teaches us. I think Jesus exuded, radiated the invitation for publicans and sinners to come near.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:07:30 That's why they came near to him. And he told the most beautiful story in all literature to publicans and sinners because they drew near. And they knew they could draw near, and that

there was no condemnation in him, and he would forget their sins. Not just forgive their sins, but he would forget their sins.

Hank Smith: 01:07:55 He even uses that Jacob-Esau language, right? He fell on his neck and kissed him.

John Bytheway: 01:08:00 The Prodigal Son. Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:08:00 He does, and I get it here. We go back to Genesis 45. That's a good take in. "You go get my father now," he says, "and bring him down." And then 14, he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept. Joseph, he needed for Christmas a handkerchief, because he's doing a lot of weeping here.

Hank Smith: 01:08:22 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:08:23 And Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed-

Hank Smith: 01:08:28 Dehydrated.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:08:28 ... he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them. And after that, his brethren talked with him. That's a beautiful...

Hank Smith: 01:08:40 45:15. Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:08:43 Sometimes, I think if God said, "Well, I'll let you go back in time and you can witness some scriptural moments. I'll give you four or five of them." Whatever. I mean, I'd want a hundred of them. But if only got a few, this would certainly be one that would do good for all of us to witness. Some of the most beautiful scenes in all of Shakespeare's plays are reconciliation scenes. He really believed in it. And he pens some for the theater designed for people to see. It's more emotive. Beautiful reconciliation scenes. Beautiful, beautiful scenes in The Tempest, in King Lear, in Winter's Tale, in Pericles. It was very, very important to him. And I think it's important in the scriptures. And I visualize that, kissed all his brethren and wept upon them.

Hank Smith: 01:09:50 And then they tell Jacob. It's always one of my favorite parts in scripture. Joseph is alive. And not only that, he runs Egypt.

John Bytheway: 01:09:59 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:09:59 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 01:09:59 And wait for this part.

Hank Smith: 01:10:03 Jacob's heart fainting.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:10:04 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 01:10:04 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:10:05 And then he goes, and Jacob... Now you go to chapter 46, verse 29. I get another weeping when Jacob comes and Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet Israel, his father, to Goshen and presented himself and he fell on his neck and wept on his neck. I like the last three words, "A good while." He wept on his father's neck.

Hank Smith: 01:10:33 How many years are we talking about that they've been separated?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:10:37 Well, there's probably 22. I think he says... I probably can't pinpoint that verse. I think he says... it's the second... They're into the second year by now. So that would be 22 years. 22 years.

John Bytheway: 01:10:58 If he was sold at 17, then he's approximately 39.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:11:03 Yeah, roughly. Yeah. At this time. So then they come down. Then you get the little thing. That's another principle, you've probably talked about it earlier with Pharaoh's dreams. But chapter 47 is, everybody coming and Joseph buying up, getting all their money and their land and their cattle. And one of the other great principles of the Joseph story is, "In times of feasting, prepare for times of famine, because the famine's always going to come."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:11:32 For us, it came in 2008, 2009. It came with COVID. So feast, famine, feast, famine. So when things are good, you prepare for times when things are bad.

John Bytheway: 01:11:47 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:03 Welcome to Part Two of this week's podcast.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 There's a great talk in the April 2003 General Conference by David E Sorensen. He was in the Presidency of the 70s, at the time. It's called Forgiveness will Change Bitterness to Love, and he talks about these two farmers in the middle of Utah. Mike, you probably remember this story.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 00:25 I do.
- Hank Smith: 00:26 Chett and Walt, who got into a disagreement over water rights, and it ended up becoming actually a murder case, and just two neighbors. With fighting and murder, and the children and grandchildren are involved later, that they still hate each other. Then Elder Sorensen goes through the story of Joseph, where he says, "You can change this bitterness to love." And this is what he says, "That is not to say that forgiveness is easy. When someone has hurt us or those we care about, that pain can almost be overwhelming. It can feel as if the pain, or the injustice is the most important thing in the world, and that we have no choice but to seek vengeance."
- Hank Smith: 01:13 "But Christ, the Prince of Peace, teaches us a better way. It can be very difficult to forgive someone the harm they've done to us. But when we do, we open ourselves up to a better future. No longer does someone else's wrongdoing control our course. When we forgive others, it frees us to choose how we will live our own lives. Forgiveness means that the problems of the past no longer dictate our destinies and we can focus on the future with God's love in our hearts."
- Hank Smith: 01:39 So I'll just encourage everyone to go read this talk, or go listen to it from David Sorensen. It's a beautiful one, because Joseph could focus on the 22 years he did not have Father in his life, but he chooses not to.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 01:55 The next principle that I think is really important, we've got one more weeping. Joseph's going to weep one more time. And this

idea is going to be emphasized again, that God will make the negatives positive. Genesis is going to end in that. So, here's the principle is the way I'd say it. Accept forgiveness when it is offered freely. Remember, there are no servants in the kingdom, only brothers.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 02:24 So Jacob dies. He's in Egypt 17 years. Genesis 50. So, if it was, let's say year 22, when he comes down from the selling. Okay, Joseph was sold. 22 years later, the family comes down. 17 years later, so we are at 39 years now, after the injury was done to Joseph, and Jacob dies. Now, what do the brothers think?
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 02:55 Verse 15, "When Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said Joseph will per adventure hate us. And will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 03:09 That's the expectation of a lot of people. The vengeance attitude. They sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, "Thy father did command before he died, saying, so shall ye say unto Joseph. Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren and their sin, for they did unto thee evil. And now we pray thee forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 03:42 They haven't accepted. You know, I wonder how often God weeps, when we don't really believe he forgives us. When he says, "Look, I've not only forgiven. I forget. And it's important in your relationship to realize that I not only forgive, but there is forgetfulness in the relationship and you need to forget it, too."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 04:07 Joseph wept, when they spake unto him and his brethren also went and fell down before his face. And they said, "Behold, we be thy servants." Now, Joseph doesn't want servants, he wants brothers. There's an echo in the prodigal son. What does the prodigal son say to his father? "I will arise. I will go to my father and I will say unto him, father I have sinned before heaven, and in thy sight."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 04:33 Just what the brothers are saying here. "We did evil. We know." "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." "We are no more worthy to be called thy brothers, make me as one of thy servants." I know the relationship can't be the same, so I'm content with servant. And the prodigal son was given to answer the question. When we return, when we come near, do we come near as servants? Do we return as servants in the kingdom? Or do we return as brothers and sons?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 05:06 And Joseph said unto them, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God?" As for you, you thought evil against me. I'll admit that. "But God meant it unto good to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people life." We're back at that theme, God will make all negatives positive.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 05:25 "Now, therefore, fear you not. I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them." Sometimes when you're the sinned against, when you're on the hurting end of a problem, and the other person truly is wrestling with their own guilt, and their own shame, and their own part of that, they need to be reassured, often again and again. They're forgiven, it's forgotten. There's no hardness in the heart and you can come near. I want you near. I don't want you trailing clouds of guilt and shame, and I don't want to trail clouds of just a little bit of still resentment and anger. We're going to forget, both of us. We're going to find the forgetfulness in the forgiveness. So, when forgiveness is offered freely, accept it. And remember, there are no servants in the kingdom. There are only sons, there are only brothers. And that's a wonderful place. That's the last great truth, emphasis to the book of Genesis. The book of family.

John Bytheway: 06:39 Yeah, that verse 17, because I'm thinking too, that Jacob has to forgive the sons for what they did to Joseph.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 06:49 He does.

John Bytheway: 06:50 Here, he's saying-

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 06:51 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 06:51 "Joseph, forgive your brothers." And gosh, Jacob must have had to ... "You did what? You did what for these 22 years? I haven't had my son around me because you sold him, and told me that he was killed. And he's alive?" Wow.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 07:09 Now there's great irony, when they've sold Joseph, they come back to Jacob and he's weeping, now they can kind of end his weeping. And the verse says, they comforted him. And I'd say, well, that's an ironic word. They comforted him about the loss of Joseph, when they know he's not. Benjamin probably didn't know. Maybe Benjamin, all his life. I don't suppose Leah knew. That would've been an interesting meeting, to go back when Jacob, Leah, Jo- the whole family finds out and they have to say what they did, and what's happened, and great hurt was done to Joseph.

John Bytheway: 07:52 And to Jacob. Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 07:54 And to Jacob. And to Benjamin.

John Bytheway: 07:57 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 07:58 And great hurt requires great forgiveness.

John Bytheway: 08:01 When you were saying, accept forgiveness when it's freely offered, a verse that came to mind, to me, that I missed something profound in this for so many years, when Alma is talking to the Zoramites, who on the Rameumptom said, "Thou has made it known unto us, there will be no Christ."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 08:18 Right.

John Bytheway: 08:18 And so Alma goes through these texts from the plates of brass and says, "Look, God will have a son. Look at all these verses about God will have a son." Well, in Alma, 33:16, "For behold, he said," and this is Alma saying, "Zenock spake of these things." So this is Zenock, "Thou art angry, oh Lord, with this people, because they will not understand thy mercies, which though has bestowed upon them because of thy son."

John Bytheway: 08:44 And I always read it saying, "Oh look, he's saying, see, God will have a son. Your doctrine on the Rameumptom was wrong." But I missed that beautiful phrase, "Thou art angry, oh Lord, with this people because they will not understand thy mercies."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 08:59 But if I could improve on that verse, I would say, God weeps when you don't understand that.

John Bytheway: 09:08 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 09:09 That verse says he's angry. I'm not trying to correct the Book of Mormon.

John Bytheway: 09:14 Right.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 09:14 But I'm saying, I think you can improve on it. In this case, it is a weeping.

Hank Smith: 09:20 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 09:20 "I don't want you to carry this. Let it go."

John Bytheway: 09:25 Don't you understand my mercy?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 09:27 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 09:28 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 09:28 My mercy. "We're brothers. I don't want servants. It pains me for you to think that I would take vengeance on you," or that, "You don't understand, for the last 17 years, I forgave you. I forgave you before you even know who I was."

Hank Smith: 09:50 Mike, I've heard you talk about in the past this idea of, twice blessed. I think it's an old quote that you used to teach with. Can you bring that back up?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 09:59 That's from the Merchant of Venice, it's Shakespeare, and Shakespeare always has the ability to say beautifully what needs to be said. So here is the speech, it's given by Portia when Shylock wants his pound of flesh. He wants vengeance. He wants revenge. And Portia, the woman, the lead, is trying to show him there's a better thing than justice.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 10:27 And so she says, "The quality of mercy is not strained. It dropeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed. It blesses him that gives and him that takes." That's what the meaning of twice blessed is, it means both parties are blessed by it. The one who receives the forgiveness, and the one that gives the forgiveness. Joseph teaches that really beautifully. And then the second part of that quote really fits Joseph because Joseph is in a position of power over his brothers. Shakespeare says, 'tis, meaning mercy, "'tis mightiest, in the mightiest. It becomes the throned monarch better than his crown. His scepter shows the force of temporal power. The attribute to awe and majesty wherein does sit the dread and fear of kings. But mercy is above this sceptered sway. It is enthroned in the hearts of kings. It is an attribute to God himself, and earthly power doth then show likest gods when mercy seasons justice.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 12:01 "Though justice be thy plea, consider this. That in the course of justice, none of us should see salvation. We do pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 12:21 I wish I could write like that. That's a lovely exclamation point on many stories. There's reconciliation, like I say, between Sarah and Hagar, between Jacob and Esau.

Hank Smith: 12:36 Twice blessed.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 12:38 Twice blessed, it's twice blessed. It blesses the person who gives it and it blesses the person who receives it. And it's easiest to give when we tie it in with the other great principle of Joseph's life, God's going to make it all the negatives good.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 12:53 So no matter what people do to hurt you, no matter what happens, if you just stay on the path, God will make it good. Life is fair, life is just. Or at least eternity is, and it's going to be that way because God has that power and ability to make it all that way. This is a plan of happiness and he wants us happy and that's how it's going to end.

Hank Smith: 13:22 It seems like a critical paradigm, Mike, is the idea of if I forgive, I'm not giving up something that I deserve, I'm actually choosing to bless my own life. Just, it seems in forgiveness that I'm sacrificing so much to forgive someone when if you can change that paradigm, that twice blessed, you're actually choosing a blessing.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 13:44 Yeah. And it's hard. Forgiveness is hard. Joseph, we don't know what he felt all those years. I think probably hearing his brother's agony over it touched something in him, and that's that first weeping that he gets.

John Bytheway: 14:00 You talked about creating a space in yourself, and I wonder if it took Joseph 22 years to get to the point where he could say, "You know what? Maybe God did this. Maybe God..." Those beautiful verses.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 14:15 When he names his sons?

John Bytheway: 14:16 Yeah. When he says, "God did send me before you to preserve life. God sent me before you, it was not you that sent me hither but God." Maybe it took him a while to get to that place and say, "Maybe this is how I can make sense of all of this." Or, "This is the design of God all along." I wonder if it took time.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 14:39 Yeah. And I assume it did it. It would've been nice to have interviewed Joseph at year 10.

John Bytheway: 14:46 How's it going?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 14:47 How you feeling?

John Bytheway: 14:48 How you feeling about them wings? How's your family?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 14:53 Right, yeah. We might see a little bit different viewpoint, but he does, through all those years. And we talked about that principle, if you find yourself living the unexpected life, make the best of it and don't get mad at God.

Hank Smith: 15:09 I wanted you to talk about Judah, the great, great grandfather of Jesus here offering himself and where he says, "How can I go to the father and the lad not be with me?" Do you remember teaching that years ago?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 15:23 I don't want to read it that this is the meaning of it, but I'm trying to always get insight into the father and the son. The purpose of the scriptures is to answer Pharaoh's question, that you'll be talking about, I think, next week. The theme of all scripture, ironically, is given by Pharaoh when he says to Moses, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice? I know not the Lord."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 15:53 So the purpose of scripture is to learn to know the Lord so we will obey his voice. The scriptures are the answer to Pharaoh's question, "Well, let me introduce you to Him." And if you know this God, you will want to obey Him and worship Him, if you really know what He's like. So, the story of Judah pleading for his father and his brother, sometimes I like to think of Jesus standing before his Father pleading for all of us, saying, "I will abide instead."

Hank Smith: 16:31 Yeah, "Take me instead."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 16:34 "Take me instead, and let Michael go up with his brother and let Michael go." I like the up. "Let Michael go up and be with his father." So, in a sense, Judah, in pleading for him. Like I say, I'm not saying this is messianic in any way. I don't think it is messianic. It is a brother pleading for his father who loves this child. He's a brother pleading for his brother. And in his mind, he doesn't know Joseph put the silver cup in there.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 17:16 He doesn't say, "Oh, the little kleptomaniac, let him stay. Good riddance, we finally got rid of Rachel's other son." He really pleads for him, and I think Judah in that plea has echoes of the Savior pleading for all of us, because he knows the distress of his father if we don't return. And so, "Take me, I will take the consequences and let them go free."

Hank Smith: 17:50 I love that principle of, "How shall I go up to the father and the lad not be with me? How can I return without him?" There's a little bit of, in my mind I don't, obviously I don't think it was

meant this way, but I hear a little John 17, the great intercessory prayer.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 18:07 We might not say that Judah's a similitude of Christ here or a foreshadowing or a type of Him. But we would say Judah would have an understanding of the heart of Christ. I can hear the Savior say, "Do you understand me now, Judah? Do you understand my heart? Because your heart is with my heart in this thing. Concern for a father who loves his children and the willingness to pay whatever price is necessary in order that the lad be with me."
- Hank Smith: 18:46 You see the connection with Christ's lineage from the tribe of Judah. Yeah, I think it's okay to see there.
- Hank Smith: 18:52 What were the other two things you want to do?
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 18:55 Well, I've got, it's in the patriarchal blessings that are given. Jacob gives Ephraim and Manasseh their blessing, and then he goes to all the others. You sense the tragedy of Reuben a little bit when he calls him the excellency of dignity. Reuben must have been a really wonderful man, but he has that, that he went and defiled Bilhah. And if Joshua is right, that's an even worse thing.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 19:24 So the next principle I would say, and it's related to other ones, is our interpretation of events and even prophecies may change dramatically with time and perspective. So, here's the most interesting of all the blessings to me, it's in verse five and six and five through seven. It's Simeon and Levi's blessings. We usually go to Judah's blessing, "The scepter will not depart from Judah till Shiloh comes." And Joseph's blessing, "A fruitful bough hanging over the wall." There's a lot of talk about that, but I don't think people talk about Simeon and Levi's blessings, and I just would point something out to you. So verse five.
- Hank Smith: 20:19 What chapter are we in again?
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 20:20 Chapter 49. Diana is raped. She's the younger sister of Leah's family, Judah and Simeon. So, they go up and they trick the little village where she was not only raped, but they still have her. She's been kidnapped and they trick him into getting circumcised. And then they go in and they massacre all the men. Okay.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 20:42 You know that story. It's Jacob is referring to that moment. Genesis is a violent world. It's not a safe world. And so he says,

"Simeon and Levi are brethren, instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. They killed innocent people. O my soul, come not thou into their secret. Under their assembly, mine honor be not thou united, for in their anger they slew a man and in their self-will they dig down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce. And their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide and disperse them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 21:20 Now that sounds like a curse. Doesn't it? I read it for you. I say, "That's a curse." But look at in verse seven, "I will divide them in Jacob."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 21:34 Now who's descendants of Levi? Well, Moses and Aaron are the descendants of Aaron. And what happens to the tribe of Levi? Where is their inheritance in the passing out of tribal inheritances in the land?
- John Bytheway: 21:50 They're spread among everything, aren't they?
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 21:52 They are divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel. But is it a bad thing or a good thing?
- John Bytheway: 22:01 That's where the priesthood is out to bless all of the tribes.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 22:04 That's where the priesthood is. So, the actual fulfillment of Jacob's blessing, that I don't think even he realized when he gave it, it sounds like it's a really bad thing as you read it in Genesis. But when you get later on in the Old Testament and you realize that the Levites for their devotion to God are given the priesthood and are scattered in all the inheritances of the other tribes in order to bless them with the ordinances and the sacrifices. It is not a curse at all. It really is a blessing.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 22:44 So sometimes our interpretations of events may change dramatically with time and perspective. The fulfillment of cursed, it sounds like a curse, but even God can turn curses into blessings. He can do that in the way they are divided and scattered. It's a good dividing and a good scattering for them.
- Hank Smith: 23:09 Yeah. That's the theme of today. Isn't it?
- John Bytheway: 23:11 Yeah, exactly.
- Hank Smith: 23:11 That the worst of things, the Lord can turn it around.
- John Bytheway: 23:16 It's Isaiah's beauty for ashes idea.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 23:21 Yeah, it is. Well, maybe one last final thought. Joseph teaches us a lot of things, and there's a phrase that is used of Jacob and of Joseph. Joseph, in Genesis 50, we didn't go there, but that's okay, in the JST. I'll just pull one thing out of that I really, really love. So, I'm in Genesis 49:33, Jacob's dying. He's given all his children blessings, or a curse that turns into a blessing. And in verse 33,
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 24:00 "When Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost." And I just love this Old Testament expression, "and was gathered unto his people." And so, my last principle is death is but a gathering unto our people. And a lot of us have, it's an emotional thing for me, I debated whether I'd even try and do this, there are people on the other side of the veil that we really want to be gathered to. And I love that phrase, "Death, where is thy sting?" Paul asks. And I would say to Paul, "I know where it is. I know where death's sting is. It's right here in my memory and in my heart."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 25:11 I know the sting, but one day we will be gathered unto our people, mothers, fathers, siblings, children, spouses. We go to the Joseph Smith translation Genesis 50:24 through 38. Joseph is now old and he is dying and he gives all these predictions. "There'll be a Moses. He'll take you out when Moses comes. When you go back to Canaan, you take my bones with you." In verse 24 of Genesis 50 in the JST, at the back of page 799, Joseph said unto his brethren, "I die and go unto my fathers. And I go down to my grave with joy." It's just a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful thing because of the reunions. Talk about reconciliations and reunions, that's got to be one of the most beautiful, to be gathered to your people, and go down to your grave with joy to go to your fathers.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 26:32 And I think to be able to say to the fathers, as Joseph would be able to say, and which I hope to say to my fathers who gave me the inheritance, the birthright I have, the right to Gospel truth, the right to all the beauties of the Gospel truth, and many other blessings. But especially the blessings of truth and a love of God that came from my first ancestors that accepted the Gospel. I was handed down them from my mother and my mother to me that one day. I think Joseph could say to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "I accepted the gift. I have not broken the chain." You can say, "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, I have not broken the chain. I passed down the birthright. I gave the inheritance. I passed on the gifts and the covenants that you gave to me." I think he's also saying to his children, Ephraim and Asa, "You too must pass it on. You too will pass it on."

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 27:55 I can see that my children have accepted it. So, if I were to die today, I would be gathered to my fathers, I would be gathered to my people, and I would go down to my grave with joy and be able to say to them, "I passed on the gifts." My children believe they're faithful. I know a lot of people try and sometimes the children don't accept the gifts, and eventually Ephraim is going to be a mess in the Old Testament, the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, but at least Joseph has, as Paul, fought a good fight, finished the course, kept the faith, and so he goes down with joy. And that's what we all want to say when we're gathered to our people. "I kept the faith. I passed on the gift. I accepted the gifts. I did my very best to pass it on to the next generations." And every generation has to decide, will they accept those gifts or not? My patriarchal blessing ends with that idea. "I bless you with a spirit of Elijah," it says, "that you and your posterity will render and fulfill the promises made unto the fathers that though mayest yet meet with them in the resurrection of the righteous with the hand of fellowship, love, and great rejoicing together."

John Bytheway: 29:27 Wow.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 29:28 So I think one of the last great, beautiful messages of Joseph and Jacob is how to die. I want to be gathered to my people, one person in particular.

John Bytheway: 29:44 Yeah. We started out talking about how these are stories of families, of husbands, of wife relationships, of parents, child, of siblings and isn't it wonderful that even though those relationships are so rocky in these chapters, that this is what he's excited about, is to be gathered unto his people, in Jacob's case, and then for Joseph. Where do you ever see that phrase, "I go down to my grave with joy"?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 30:15 Right.

John Bytheway: 30:15 Isn't that something?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 30:18 And that's in the JST. I'm grateful he gave us that little.

John Bytheway: 30:20 Yeah.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 30:21 To me, that's the most important addition to the JST. We go to some of the other things, the prophecies of the coming to Joseph Smith, but the one that I love most is that phrase, "I go down to my grave with joy." I'm not going to be ashamed when I stand before them.

- John Bytheway: 30:36 I really want to end on a high note, but I did want to ask you, because I've had students ask me and they've said, "Hey, my patriarchal blessing says I'm the tribe of Dan. And when I look to see what blessing Dan was given," and usually I'll just say, "You've got to read your own patriarchal blessing."
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 30:53 Yeah, if I had a son who was given a Dan as a patriarchal lineage, what we don't want to do is to put some hierarchy. They all have responsibilities. They all have the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all of them, as does Ishmael.
- John Bytheway: 31:15 Yeah. He's from Abraham.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 31:16 Ishmael fulfills the Abrahamic covenant. Islam is a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. The Quran, the prophet Muhammad, is a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant that God will bless through the lineage of Abraham all the nations of the earth. And Islam has been a great blessing to millions, billions of people for 1,400 years. They also fulfill it. The Jews fulfill the Abrahamic covenant. Christianity fulfills it. Three great religions arose out of Abraham and those are the blessings that are most critical. But the names of them, I think Moses is going to give another set of patriarchal blessings in Deuteronomy and sometimes I go there. So, here's Reuben in Deuteronomy 33, verse six, "Let Reuben live and not die and let not his men be few." That's a beautiful blessing that you would have posterity and live. Live how, where you can interpret that.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 32:33 Verse seven, Judah, "Hear Lord, the voice of Judah. Bring him unto his people. Let his hands be sufficient for him. Be thou a help to him from his enemies." Levi, who gets the curse, but in chapter 33 of Deuteronomy, verse 10, the Levites, "They shall teach Jacob thy judgements and Israel thy law. They shall put incense, offer the sacrifices. Benjamin, the beloved of the Lord, shall dwell in safety by him and the Lord shall cover him all the day long." That's a beautiful blessing to apply to somebody from Benjamin. Verse 18, Zebulun, he said, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out and, Issachar, in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain." Zebulun and Issachar I'd say, "Well, you are to rejoice and invite people to the mountain of the Lord. There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness for they shall suck of the abundance of the sea of treasures hid in the sands.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 34:00 " And of Gad, blessed be he that enlargeth Gad. He dwelleth as a lion and humbles, teareth the arm with the crown of the head. You get them all and you'll find positive things. Gad, still in verse 21 with the heads of the people. "He came with the heads of

the people. He executed the justice of the Lord and his judgements with Israel."

- John Bytheway: 34:28 Deuteronomy 33 is a great text to put side by side with those patriarchal blessings in Genesis 49 because that helps a lot. And that's Moses giving each of the tribes a blessing. I'm looking at all the footnotes. There's about six to Deuteronomy 33 in Genesis 49.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 34:49 Naphtali, "Satisfied with favor full with the blessings of the Lord." Asher, "Let Asher be blessed with children. Let him be acceptable to his brethren." I don't think anybody needs to feel somehow I'm not Ephraim or Manasseh. I'm Naphtali and that somehow that's a diminishment in any way. You are representing that tribe because they all are represented in the restoration. They all were going to do good things. They would all fulfill the Abrahamic covenant.
- John Bytheway: 35:25 They're all House of Israel.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 35:27 They're all House of Israel and there are positive things said about all of them.
- John Bytheway: 35:30 Yeah.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 35:30 And like I say, even the curse...
- John Bytheway: 35:32 Yeah, of Levite.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 35:34 ... is a blessing.
- John Bytheway: 35:34 Yeah.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 35:34 Even Levite.
- John Bytheway: 35:35 Yeah. Oh, well, thank you for covering that.
- Hank Smith: 35:39 Mike, this has been just an absolutely wonderful day. Wow. I loved the story of Joseph before. I thought it was one of the greatest stories ever told and I feel that even more so now.
- John Bytheway: 35:51 I am so glad you said to mark all of the weepings, and I think those are probably part joy, part sadness. Part, I'm so glad we're reunited. There was so much that came into each of those weepings I think, it was really fun to mark all of those.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 36:08 Relief.

- Hank Smith: 36:10 I don't weep as much as I wish I did, sometimes. I think it's a gift.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 36:15 There is a beautiful Jewish story about Adam and Eve when they leave the garden and God says to them you are going into a world of incredible pain and challenge and difficulties and your lives are going to be hard and sometimes bitter. So, I brought you a gift. Look. And he holds out his hand and there's a little pearl, a little clear pearl in the palm of God's hand. They say what is this? And God says it is a tear. It is a tear. When life is difficult for you, when your heart is full, these pearls will fall from your eyes. You will be comforted.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 37:10 It's just a beautiful little Jewish wisdom. Tears are a gift from God. We cry a lot of different tears, don't we.
- Hank Smith: 37:19 Mike, before we let you go, I think our listeners would be interested in your thoughts on where your scholarship and your education and your faith, what that journey's been like for you.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 37:32 I think all of us have our challenges. I was, in my patriarchal blessing, since we kind of talked about those, I was blessed with a believing heart. It's a good thing, because I also have a questioning mind. Sometimes the believing heart and the questioning mind have some interesting conversations with each other. The Old Testament can spark a lot of those interesting things. Where the heart says yeah, the flood was universal over the whole earth, and my mind says do you know how impossible that really is? We need 10 aircraft carriers to hold all those animals.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 38:20 So occasionally my mind has to tell my heart we need to look at this with reason. And sometimes my heart has to say to my mind you just have to trust me here in some of these issues. I have wrestled with just about every issue in the church that people wrestle with. That is kind of why I did this last little book that you talked about, Holding On. My tactic usually isn't that I'm always going to be able to resolve all the issues in church history or some social issue today or some scriptural problem. What I want to find are strategies that help me just to hold on.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 39:04 That whole idea in my life of holding on comes from the Old Testament, from, of all books, Habakkuk. How many people ever read Habakkuk? You know? But Habakkuk is wrestling with understanding God and God's ways. He has questions and he wrestles with them. We all have questions and we wrestle with them. It's okay to have questions, it's okay to wonder about the church's stand or the imperfections.

- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 39:38 I have learned to live with imperfect scriptures, imperfect people, imperfect prophets, imperfect me, imperfect organizations. I'm okay with it. And Habakkuk ends, he doesn't get answers to all his questions. He's told by God, trust me. You'll have to live by your faith. Sometimes faith is like a tiny, tiny little ledge on a high mountain cliff. It's not a wide road. It's a tiny little cliff. And Habakkuk says God will make my feet like hind's feet. A hind is a deer, an ibex, who can walk on the tiniest little ledges of rock.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 40:26 There have been times in my life where my faith felt like Habakkuk's high places. He will give me hind's feet that I may walk on my high places and not fall off. I just have learned to hold on. Sooner or later the path widens. I haven't been walking on a tiny ledge all my life, but I know what it's like to walk on a tiny ledge and have the road widen and go back and it goes back to a tiny ledge. So, we just hold on.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 41:02 I'm grateful for Habakkuk's image, it's a beautiful image. I try to help people. The road will widen. There's in Genesis a beautiful thing that the servant of Abraham says when he's going to get Rebekah. He finds her. She waters the camel, I'm sure you've talked about that, there's 10 camels. He says, I being in the way God led me, to Rebekah. To my master's brother. I like that, I being in the way. If I just stay on the path God can lead me.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 41:44 So I say every good thing you want in life is on the path. Every good thing you want is on the path somewhere. It may not be at the position on the path that you want it to be on. It may be way down the path. But if I leave the path, God can't lead me. He can only give me all my heart desires if I stay on the path.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 42:13 I really love that phrase, I being in the way God led me. So we want to stay on the path. When the path narrows and it doesn't seem like I can progress or move anywhere, maybe I won't progress for a while. I just hold on. I just take those hind's feet God gave me and I just hold on. We've all seen images of mountain goats and ibex. Every time I go to Israel to the Judean wilderness I am hoping to show the people the ibex on the narrow ledges of the cliffs so they have a good visual of Habakkuk and they have a good visual for their lives and what they need to do.
- Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 42:57 But I do know what it is to wrestle with issues and to feel that fear that comes into your heart. What if it's not true, what if ... I don't like this position. To be angry, even. Angry at God, angry at the church. All those things. I know very deeply by personal experience. But I have the believing heart.

Hank Smith: 43:27 Yeah. So, you stay on the path.

John Bytheway: 43:31 I love that. Every good thing you want in life is on the path. Maybe President Nelson would say on the Covenant Path, right?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 43:40 Yeah. We just stay on it.

John Bytheway: 43:44 The good things are there. Eventually.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 43:46 In Islam you build your own path. In Christianity it's the narrow path you want to be on. In Islam it's the broad path you want to be on because you build it. The path into heaven lies over a chasm, kind of like Indiana Jones. You build it by your good deeds. So, the more good deeds you do, the more good thoughts, the better your life is lived, the broader the path that walks you into heaven. So, in Christianity I want to stay on the narrow path.

John Bytheway: 44:20 Interesting.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 44:20 But in Islam, Allah is saying the path into heaven is one you will build yourself. Every good deed makes it wider and wider.

John Bytheway: 44:32 Interesting.

Hank Smith: 44:33 How beautiful.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 44:35 Yeah. I love a lot about Islam. Ishmael gave us good things. He also, like I say, fulfilled the Abrahamic covenant, Islam is a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.

Hank Smith: 44:48 Wow. John Bytheway, what a day.

John Bytheway: 44:51 Wonderful.

Hank Smith: 44:52 What a day. We love having Mike here because you just know, you just know. We don't need to gush. We're grateful for you Mike.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 45:00 Thank you.

Hank Smith: 45:00 We love having you here.

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 45:01 Thank you for letting me come, it's always nice to feel useful. When you're 72 you need to feel useful, you're not as useful as you used to be. Unless you're President Nelson.

Hank Smith: 45:12 Yeah. He'd say you're just a kid, wouldn't he?

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox: 45:15 Yeah, he would.

Hank Smith: 45:16 Imagine that, just getting started. Well thank you everyone for listening and enjoying this time with Dr. Wilcox with us. We're grateful for your support. We're thankful for our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen, and our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. We hope all of you will join us next week for another episode of FollowHIM.



How do you forgive
hard things?

- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello, my friends, welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. This year for Come Follow Me, John and I are taking on an individual question for each week's lesson.
- Hank Smith: 00:11 The lesson this week is the last few chapters of Genesis, John, where Joseph of Egypt does something I think is absolutely incredible and I'm going to take him that he's genuine and sincere here. He forgives his brothers for selling him so long ago. It's almost as if he's like, "Hey, come on. It's all right. Who hasn't sold a sibling, right? We all make mistakes."
- Hank Smith: 00:38 I have had students and friends and even my own family, my own self say through the years, how do you forgive? How do you forgive these? I'm not talking about little things. My roommate drank my milk, right? You've got to be able to get past things like that. But sometimes people do things that have lasting impact, like Joseph and his brothers, right? This is serious impact on the rest of your life and he says, "I forgive you."
- Hank Smith: 01:09 So John, I'm going to throw this right in your lap. How do you counsel others to forgive these major offenses that come in life?
- John Bytheway: 01:18 Well, Hank you'll forgive me if I don't answer that.
- Hank Smith: 01:21 Yes. Okay. You'll have to forgive me for I don't know the answer.
- John Bytheway: 01:27 We can come to a realization, which is a good thing, that I can't do this without God.
- Hank Smith: 01:33 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 01:33 I don't have the strength in me to offer this forgiveness. I'm going to have to get outside help and maybe that's a good thing to realize that. There's so many verses of scripture that we kind of intellectually understand we have to forgive. I will forgive, whom I'll forgive, of you it is required to forgive all men. Or in the Lord's prayer: Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors or those who sin against us.

John Bytheway: 01:56 But don't you think that's true that there are some, where I think I'm going to need God's help to be able to let go of this and to move on or to just say, you take the justice and mercy, and that's the way I like to look at it. There's still going to be justice and mercy, but I'm going to put that into the hands of God and let him do it and I've got to move forward.

Hank Smith: 02:17 I think that's wise, that at some point you have to say, I'm turning this over to you. I'm going to have closure on this. And then you keep returning to that closure because it's going to come back to your mind. And then you say, well, I handed this over. I handed this over to the Lord a long time ago. And you can keep coming back to that moment of saying, I made a decision. Right.

Hank Smith: 02:39 I remember Elder Holland says, sometimes you have to forgive and then forgive again, and then forgive again. So, I think the Lord knows this is going to be a process for us. I don't think he's expecting everything happen right now.

John Bytheway: 02:57 Yeah. I don't think it's instantaneous. I think a lot of us will struggle with that and that's part of the growth process, perhaps. We finally get to that point where we say, you know what? I've got to turn this over to God because I can't do it myself. Or, I need his help to be able to forgive because I don't have the strength in me, so that's probably a good thing.

Hank Smith: 03:19 In Matthew 18, the Savior talks about a man who was forgiven of a big, big debt; 10,000 talent debt, an incredible amount. Billions of dollars. Then the man went out and sought one of his fellow servants who owed him a little bit of money, a couple thousand dollars.

John Bytheway: 03:36 Like a hundred pence or something

Hank Smith: 03:39 He's really mad and he takes him by the throat. He lays hands on him and he says, "Give me what you owe." And the guy says, "I can't do it. Please forgive me." And the guy says, "I'm going to put you..." He puts him in prison and then the guy who forgave

him of the big debt, he calls him back in and he says, "Oh, that wicked servant. I forgave thee, all that debt because thou desirest me. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant? Even as I had pity on thee."

- Hank Smith: 04:08 So there is a moment where the Lord says, look, when I forgive you, I expect you to one, to be thankful for that. Two, learn from me. Learn how quick I am to forgive. I want you to try to become more like me. I want you to practice being like me and that you be quick to forgive.
- Hank Smith: 04:33 We both know Chris Williams, that incredible story of his family. Members of his family being killed by a drunk driver and his decision. He said, I had to make to forgive, or this was going to eat me alive. It was going to destroy my life if I couldn't forgive.
- Hank Smith: 04:52 That's part of this idea of, I've got to try this. And one thing I've learned from that parable is don't go seek out these people and seek revenge. Don't stalk them on Facebook. Don't stalk them online. Don't go seek them out. That's part of forgiveness is I'm not trying to hurt you. I'm not trying to seek you out. Maybe it hasn't happened in my heart yet, but my actions are, I'm kind of staying away. Does that make sense? I'm not seeking you out to hurt you.
- John Bytheway: 05:23 It's kind of just an old saying, I guess. But when we refuse to forgive, we burn the bridge over which we ourselves must cross, that idea. It's just, the scriptures I think, we sometimes call it the doctrine of reciprocity, of if you will not forgive neither will your Father in Heaven forgive you. It goes both ways. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. And if I want mercy, I have to be merciful. If I want forgiveness, I have to be forgiving. That doesn't make it easy but intellectually it helps me understand. I've got to forgive if I want forgiveness.
- Hank Smith: 05:59 Right. We should probably say, John, that forgiving doesn't mean you're going to go put yourself back in a terrible situation or that you-
- John Bytheway: 06:04 Never.
- Hank Smith: 06:05 Need to reconcile and that you've got to say, hey, come back walking into my life again. If someone were to hurt my family, I can forgive them and not allow them too near my family and that's still forgiveness.
- John Bytheway: 06:18 Right.

Hank Smith: 06:19 The Lord never says forgiveness looks like this, where the two... I mean, if you can reconcile, that's beautiful. Right? We've just discussed Jacob and Esau in our podcast and that's a beautiful moment where the two come back together again and they can rebuild their relationship but sometimes that can't happen and that's okay.

John Bytheway: 06:37 An example I think of is Nephi got to a point where, 2 Nephi 4, Lehi dies. 2 Nephi 5. I just have to go.

Hank Smith: 06:46 I have to separate.

John Bytheway: 06:48 There's no reconciling. I have to separate from my family, which must have broken his heart. I mean maybe Lehi said, keep the family together. Maybe Nephi tried but I just have to go. He could forgive, but he didn't stay because it was too dangerous. Maybe that's a good example of what you were saying a minute ago.

Hank Smith: 07:09 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 07:09 You don't bring your family into a bad situation because I forgive. You can forgive, but you may need to separate and maybe that's opening more than we want to tackle right now.

Hank Smith: 07:19 But there needs to be boundaries. You're okay to have boundaries that protect yourself.

John Bytheway: 07:26 Right.

Hank Smith: 07:26 Right. I think there's plenty of scriptural basis for that. I'm reminded of President James E. Faust, some of our younger listeners won't even remember who that is, but he was one of my favorite speakers when I was a kid. I remember sitting in priesthood meeting, in the priesthood session and sit and watch him and he had Parkinson's. He would shake and his very last talk, we can look this up. Easy, just use your Google and thumb him and look up James E. Faust, forgiveness. It'll be the first thing that comes up and his last talk was on forgiveness and it was incredible talk and it centered on this.

John Bytheway: 08:00 Is that the Amish? The story of the Amish?

Hank Smith: 08:03 These Amish people. This terrible, terrible tragedy of these shootings that occurred in a school there and the way they reached out to the family of the shooter to comfort them. This

idea of they're in a bad place too and we need to help them. It was a beautiful, beautiful moment. Really was.

John Bytheway: 08:26 That's a really good resource to point people too, because that had an impact on me. I remember that talk, especially because he was talking about people who are not of our faith, but people who had power to forgive. That was a great one.

Hank Smith: 08:40 Yeah. So just remember I think, John, this is a process, not an event. You might have to forgive over and over and over, but your heart's in the right place. You want this to happen. And like you said, we might need to outsource this a little bit and bring God in and say, I need your help. I can't forgive. You've got to give me help and then let the Lord do his work.

Hank Smith: 09:03 Well, we hope this has been helpful. We want you to come join us on our full podcast. Come join us this week. We're with Dr. Mike Wilcox talking about Joseph of Egypt and the incredible person that he became and how he was able to forgive his brothers.

Hank Smith: 09:16 If you can't do that though, that's okay. Come join us next week for another FollowHIM Favorites.