



“My Heart Rejoiceth in the Lord”

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 have women’s choices affected nations? Dr. Gaye Strathearn explores what it means to be family, the power of covenants, and the value of expressing gratitude to the Lord, even when long-awaited blessings have yet to come in the story of Naomi and Ruth.

Part 2:

Dr. Strathearn returns and discusses Hannah’s faithfulness in the face of trials, and Samuel’s experiences learning to hear the voice of the Lord.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Gaye Strathearn
- 01:19 Introduction of Dr. Gaye Strathearn
- 04:05 Background to Ruth
- 07:08 Role of women
- 09:49 Ruth and Naomi’s lives differed from expectation
- 12:24 Ruth is a Moabites
- 17:18 Hank shares a personal story about drought
- 18:43 Naomi becomes a widow, Ruth remains
- 25:14 Emma Smith stayed with Lucy Mack Smith
- 26:03 The Lord is evident in this story
- 29:03 God hasn’t abandoned us
- 31:21 Two women who aren’t in competition
- 37:53 Boaz looks out for Ruth as she gleans
- 43:07 Boaz as kinsman redeemer
- 46:08 Naomi as matchmaker
- 50:20 God hasn’t abandoned Naomi and Ruth
- 52:24 Virtue isn’t just chastity, it is power
- 54:25 Levirate marriage
- 58:55 Ruth and Boaz marry and have a son
- 1:01:42 God, Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz work together
- 1:02:50 When it feels like God has abandoned us
- 1:06:32 End of Part I–Dr. Gaye Strathearn
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Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Gaye Strathearn
- 00:07 Hannah longs for a child
- 03:27 Mothers are introduced in the Hebrew Bible
- 03:55 Introduction to Hannah and her husband
- 07:28 Hannah wants a son for the Lord
- 11:54 Dr. Strathearn shares a personal story about dealing with imperfect people
- 14:33 Hannah delivers Samuel to the temple
- 19:04 Hannah sings praises
- 23:07 Samuel is different than sons of Eli
- 29:04 Contrast between Hannah and Eli
- 32:46 Samuel learns to hear the voice of the Lord

- 39:10 Hannah's influence over Samuel's life
- 40:46 Dr. Strathearn shares her journey as a scholar and a disciple.
- 52:45 End of Part II—Dr. Gaye Strathearn

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Biographical Information:



Gaye Strathearn is a professor in the Department of Ancient Scripture and in the Ancient Near East Studies program at BYU. She has taught at BYU since 1995, including a year at BYU's Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. Dr. Strathearn received her bachelor of physiotherapy from the University of Queensland (Australia, 1982), a BA and MA in Near Eastern studies from BYU (1990 and 1992), and a PhD in religion (New Testament) from the Claremont Graduate University (2004). Her research centers primarily on New Testament topics, especially those of interest to Latter-day Saints.

Courses Taught: New Testament, Book of Mormon

Areas of Expertise: New Testament and Christian Origins

Areas of Research: The bridal chamber ritual in Gnosticism; the life and teachings of Paul; the Gospel of Matthew

Languages: Greek (reading), Biblical Hebrew (reading), Coptic (reading)

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Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to Follow Him. 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 follow him.
Hank Smith:	00:00:20	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I am here with... Okay, listen to this, everybody. My grandpa, John Bytheway, co-host. John, as the Hafens were visiting a couple of weeks ago, they said they introduced a new product line in great grandchildren, so I think they inspired you because you introduced a new product line. Tell us, what happened?
John Bytheway:	00:00:45	Yes, my oldest daughter, she served her mission in France and she met a young man in the MTC who was going to a different mission in France, but they became acquainted in the MTC. They wrote their whole missions, came home, dated and got married. Now I have my first grandson, so there's kind of a grandfatherly look, which I've always had, but now it's official.
Hank Smith:	00:01:06	Congratulations, John. That is exciting. John, we are continuing our discussion in the Old Testament, and I have been looking forward to this for a long time. Tell everybody who is with us today.
John Bytheway:	00:01:19	I'm really excited because I am very familiar with Gaye Strathearn's voice. I've watched so many over the years of those BYU round table discussions. And she's one of my favorite

guests, because everything sounds more true with an Australian accent to it.

Hank Smith: 00:01:36 Yes.

John Bytheway: 00:01:36 The scriptures sound better, everything sounds more eloquent and wiser.

Hank Smith: 00:01:41 It does.

John Bytheway: 00:01:42 Gaye Strathearn is with us. She's a professor in Ancient Scripture and Ancient Near Eastern Studies. She's taught at BYU since 1995, including a year at the Jerusalem Center. She received her Bachelor of Physiotherapy from the University of Queensland in Australia and a bachelor's master's in Near Eastern Studies from BYU and a PhD in Religion, focusing on New Testament from Claremont Graduate University. And this wasn't mentioned in her bio, but she's the author of the book, Covenant of Compassion, published by the Religious Studies Center at BYU and Deseret Book. And has a chapter in there about Naomi, Ruth and Boaz, which we will be talking about today. And her research centers primarily on New Testament topics, especially those of interest to Latter-day Saints.

John Bytheway: 00:02:29 I was curious when I saw her bio that one of her areas of research was the bridal chamber ritual in Gnosticism and the life and teachings of Paul and the gospel of Matthew. But she also knows her Old Testament, and that's what we're looking at today. And we're delighted to have you and delighted for our audience to hear the wisdom and insight you have on these chapters today. Thank you for joining us.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:02:52 Thank you, John. It's good to be here.

Hank Smith: 00:02:54 John, Gaye is the associate dean, she is on so many committees. I'm sure it's over a dozen committees. She is so busy. I was delighted when she agreed to come on. I'll wax personal here for a minute. I've been at BYU since 2010, and there is no one as kind and as brilliant as Gaye Strathearn. She has been my friend. I'm really excited to have her on for this chapter, which as I read, spoke to me of loyalty. And if you had to describe Gaye, it would be kind, brilliant and loyal. She is just everything you'd hope for in a disciple of Christ. So Gaye, this is a treat to have you here. Yeah, I've heard you say before that the book of Ruth is a nice contrast against what we've just discussed in the book of Judges, because it seems that as we read through Judges, things got just a little more depressing, and a little more

depressing, and a little more dark, and they're going to continue as Israel chooses to have monarchs. But here's this book of Ruth, this kind of jewel that sits right in the middle of these stories. Is that how you see it? Is that how we kind of approach this?

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:04:05 Yeah, certainly. The scholars see the contrast between Judges and Ruth and say, Ruth really doesn't fit in the timetable of Judges, even though chapter one says, "It came to pass in the days that the Judges ruled." So in some respects, we could look at this as the difficulties that were happening in Judges with all of their wars and things like that. And this may be the contrast in terms of at least one city or one part of Israel at that time was having something more positive. Other scholars are going to suggest that this book perhaps fits better a little bit later in time during Davidic monarchy. This book also seems to be working towards setting up David and his kingship. Others see it as fitting more in terms of the Persian period where we have Ezra coming back and having these discussions about whether you should have mixed marriages or not. And this seems to be a reaction to some of that.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:05:13 The other thing to consider is that although in our English versions of the Bible, Ruth follows Judges; in the Hebrew scriptures, it doesn't. It's in a totally different place. It's in part of the writings where we have other books like Psalm, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, those kinds of things. But you can certainly see why in the English we're making this connection because of verse one.
- John Bytheway: 00:05:41 Yes. "When the judges ruled."
- Hank Smith: 00:05:43 Okay. I'm going to write this down. It's a different place in the Hebrew Bible. I didn't know that.
- John Bytheway: 00:05:47 Before I start Ruth here, I noticed the last verse in Judges, 21. "In those days, there was no king in Israel. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." To also kind of set up what's coming. Like you said, this gem after Judges.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:06 As we look into Ruth, and then we're going to move into 1st Samuel. It's a short book in terms of what we've read so far. It's just a little blip, just for chapters, but I think we can get a lot out of this.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:06:17 Right. It's a very, very powerful book. You're right. It has a lot in it, and then I think it's worth reading. And even in preparation

for today, I was going through it and I'm going, "Oh," and seeing some things that I hadn't seen before. Maybe I could set it up this way and bring in at least as an introduction, both Ruth and those early chapters of 1st Samuel. These are really, really important, introducing David and Samuel who are going to be major players in the Old Testament. And I think it's very interesting that in both cases, their story is introduced by some very, very ordinary women who are going to have a tremendous impact in preparing the narrative for David and for Samuel. And so even though the book of Ruth is named after Ruth, I think there's an argument that could be made that this story is really focused on Naomi, primarily, rather than Ruth.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:07:18

It starts off chapter one very quickly. We get into Naomi and her story and that's kind of setting up the things that are happening in the rest of the book. And then in chapter two, she takes a little bit of a backstage presence, where Ruth and Boaz come to the fore, but they're there really to address still the issues that Naomi is facing. And then as we get to the end of Ruth, Naomi resurfaces again, because everything that has been happening here has been ways of showing Naomi that God has not abandoned her. And I think that that's really important. When we go to 1st Samuel, then we have the story of Hannah sets things up, and it's her story and her theme that is very important. Not just in chapters one through three, but also at the end of 2nd Samuel, when David is going to give his song, it really is a reflection back on Hannah's song in chapter two of 1st Samuel.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:08:23

Even though we read these often to think about David and to think about Samuel, these women play a really, really important role. And I think they deserve us thinking about them and their lives and their experiences and their faith and their testimony in preparation for that.

Hank Smith: 00:08:40

Awesome. I think there may be a tendency from those who read scripture to read about the men and say, "Everyone needs to learn from this." And then we read about the women, and sometimes we think, "Oh, women can learn from this." We need to be in the mindset that all men and women can learn from all men and women in the scriptures. I don't want to default to, "Oh, look, here's a story about a woman." I bet women can learn a lot from her. When I could say, "No, here's a story about a woman. I, as a man, can learn a lot from her."

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:09:14

Absolutely. Women are expected to learn from Moses and Nephi and these major male figures in the scriptures. And certainly we have more of them. But one of the things that I

love about the Bible is that the Bible is the place to go, really, in terms of the number of women who participate in and are a part of the storyline. But there is much to be learned for both men and women from these, because I see each of them as being examples of disciples; covenant making, covenant keeping people, and all of us can learn from that.

- John Bytheway: 00:09:49 Gaye's given us a great big picture. And I really liked from the church's manual, the first paragraph. I love to talk to teenagers about this because they have an expectation of how their lives will turn out. And I love to, when I'm with a group of teenagers, say, "I'm going to ask the adults in the room a question, and I want you teenagers to look around. Everybody raise your hand if your life turned out exactly the way you expected." And none of the adults raised their hands. This is what the opening paragraph of the manual says, "Sometimes we imagine that our lives should follow a clear path from beginning to end. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line after all. And yet life is often full of delays and detours that take us in unexpected directions. We may find that our lives are quite different from what we have thought they should be. Ruth and Hannah surely understood this."
- John Bytheway: 00:10:37 And then it goes on from there. But I think that's a good big picture way to look at what an interesting place they came from and how things unfolded here is probably not what any of them expected.
- Hank Smith: 00:10:49 Gaye, this is awesome. Walk us through the book of Ruth. I like what you said there, "We're going to show Naomi that God has not abandoned her." How many of our listeners need to hear that same message. If I'm driving in my car or I'm folding laundry and I'm listening to this, and you can help me feel that God has not abandoned me, and help me learn about the Bible. And Gaye, you're the right person for it.
- John Bytheway: 00:11:09 When my life isn't unfolding the way I expected that doesn't mean that God has abandoned you.
- Hank Smith: 00:11:14 Yeah.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:11:15 Yeah. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:11:15 So, Gaye, walk us through the book of Ruth. I'm excited.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:11:18 Okay. So as we said at the beginning, Ruth is a very, very rich book, and there's lots of avenues that I think that we could take

to talk about it. And so let me kind of set up some of these. I don't think we're going to talk about all of them, but I think that this is some of the important ones. Number one is evidence that the Abrahamic covenant was meant to bless all of the families of the earth. And I think that that's important here, because we have this intersection between Israelites and Moabites. Frankly, they didn't have a very positive relationship at this time. We're seeing questions about refugees. We've got both Naomi and her family as well as Ruth experiencing what it's like to leave your homeland and to come into another country. We're seeing that, I think, Ruth is a great example of refugees adding positively to a community. And I think that's really nice to see, but in terms of the Abrahamic covenant, we're seeing that Terah's ancestors who have been divided are now coming together, as in the descendants of Abraham and the descendants of Harran in this story.

- Hank Smith: 00:12:34 Remind our listeners who Terah and Harran are.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:12:36 Okay, so Terah is Abraham's father, and Harran is his brother. That's kind of introduced to us back in Genesis. But since this story is particularly focusing on Abraham's lineage, sometimes we forget about there are other families as well.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:54 Right. So from Harran came these Moabites?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:12:56 Yeah. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:58 Okay. And Ruth is one of those?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:13:00 Yeah. Yep.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:01 We would say Ruth was not an Israelite.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:13:04 No, she's always considered a Moabite. She's a foreigner that is emphasized here. She's never considered to be an Israelite in the book of Ruth. She's always this outsider. And of course, this is going to also set up the story of David who is going to spend time in Moab, and he's going to be criticized for that in some respects. But he sees Moab as a place of shelter for him and for his family in difficult times. So that also helps to prepare us for that story that's going to come later on.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:36 I would also throw in for our listeners who may be joining us next year, John, I don't know if anybody would listen to us that long. This story of Ruth and Boaz as well as the story of Hannah are going to come up in the gospels, both in Matthew and Luke.

So put those in the back of your mind for next year. All right. Let's keep going here.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:13:54

So let's start just in chapter one again. There's this idea that there's a famine in the land. I think that's a really important thing. It's not something that we should skip over. Why is there a famine? Well, if it is a continuation of Judges, that could be because of all of the wars that are going on, all of the crops that are being co-opted by foreign armies, being destroyed and things like that. But it also can be representative of a lack of rain. And I want to emphasize that one for a minute, because I think it has covenantal implications. In the ancient world and in Israel, that was a rain-based economy. For things to grow, they needed nine inches of rain a year for the crops to survive. And so if you had eight and a half inches, then that wasn't enough and the crops would fail.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:14:44

So why is that important? I think the answer to that is because back to Deuteronomy 11, which I'm sure you've talked about, but this covenantal experience that the Lord says as he's taking Israel out of Egypt and taking them to a very, very different land than what they knew in Egypt, where you had the flow of the Nile and then things like that. And so this is Deuteronomy 11. And let me kind of set this up with a couple of places. Verse 10, the Lord is telling Israel, "The land whither thou goest to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst seed and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land, whither ye go to possess, it is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh of water of the rain of heaven." So it's a rain agriculture.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:15:33

Verse 13, "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God and serve with all of your heart, with all of your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, and thou mayest gather..." King James says corn, but it means grain. "... And thy wine and thine oil. Take heed to yourselves," verse 16, "that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them." If you are living this covenant, if you are obeying my commandments, if you are loyal to me as your God, then I will give you the rain that you'll need. So you'll have bounteous crops. So that word, I think, has covenantal implications that we might easily just skip over.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:16:25

But because of this famine in the land, we have this family who is going to... Elimelek and Naomi and their two sons are going to leave... Or the city of Bethlehem, the town of Bethlehem, and

they're going to go over to Moab. Now, this often happens. We see this all of the time happening in ancient Israel. And we see it with Abraham and Jacob, where people, there's a famine and so they travel. Because they're trying to find places where there's food for them and pasture for their cattle. So this fits very nicely into that nomadic lifestyle, which we see in this area. But they go to Moab, a place that is traditionally at odds with the Israelites, but we see no evidence of them being treated poorly. They seem to have been welcomed by the Moabites and they live there for up to 10 years.

- Hank Smith: 00:17:18 I grew up in St. George, where we dealt with droughts. I remember praying for rain, fasting for rain, praying for rain. I had a great Bishop, his name is Bob Cope, and I was in a young married ward. I was the Elders Quorum president, and we fasted for rain. And then we were all going to go over to the Bishop's house and have a meal. And we got there, we had set up tables and chairs all outside. And he looked at me, he looked at all the tables and chairs, and he said, "I don't think we're having a lot of faith." And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Shouldn't we be setting up inside? If we really believed that our fasting would work, right? Shouldn't we bring umbrellas and ponchos." I've always remembered that moment of, "Do you really expect God will bless you with rain?" And correct me if I'm wrong here, Gaye, but don't they celebrate water every year in the Feast of Tabernacles. Isn't that-
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:18:05 Yeah. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:06 A celebration of water?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:18:08 Asking for the rains to come, that they'll be sent. And because that Deuteronomy 11 says, "I will send you your rains in the first rains and the second rains." They don't just rain, but they come at the times of planting and the times for the growth of the crop. So they're really important. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:22 Rain-based economy. I like that. So this family, Naomi and Elimelek, we're going to have two immigrant stories. Aren't we? Where they go into Moab, and then some of the family's going to come back.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:18:35 Right. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:36 So we have immigrants going into Moab and then some of the Moabites are going to come back with Ruth, particularly from Moab back into Israel.

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:18:43 So that becomes important because although initially Moab is seen as a place of plenty for them, it becomes eventually a place of bareness for Naomi. There might be plenty of food there, but she loses first her husband and then her two children. This then is setting up everything that's happening in Ruth, because Naomi I think becomes vulnerable. Then in the ancient world, your husband looked after the wife and once the husband died, the sons would step up and look after her. But now they're gone as well, so she's in a very vulnerable position, and she recognizes that. And I don't know how long after her son's died that she hears that the famine has abated in Bethlehem, but she does and she decides to return there, probably because she knows that there's still extended family there. And of course, Boaz is going to be one of those.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:19:40 So if we could kind of look at verses eight and nine, this is where she's about to return, and her two daughters-in-law have every intention of following her. And I love the language here. "And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, 'Go, return each to her mother's house. And the Lord deal kindly with you as ye have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest.'" And the word there can mean security, not necessarily an absence of work, but security, and sometimes it's even meant for the dwelling place of God. "Each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them and they lifted up their voice and wept." The thing that I want to emphasize here is what Naomi is doing. She's invoking God on behalf of these two Moabite women. And the word here is, "The Lord deal kindly with you."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:20:40 Now, the word in Hebrew here is the word, *chesed*. You got to get the [foreign sound] in there. But *chesed*, it's translated a number of different ways in the Old Testament. So sometimes I don't think we see the continuity of what's going through. Sometimes it can mean kindness or loving kindness, or sometimes it's translated as mercy, or things like that. But it's all the same word, *chesed*. And I want to stop and talk about that a little bit here, because in the book of Ruth, we don't see God very much. There's only really two places where he shows up. And so you could kind of look at this and go, "Oh God isn't important in this story." But this word, *chesed*, shows that he is intimately a part of this story, because it's God's *chesed*. And although the King James translates this word in a number of ways, most of those translations don't convey the covenantal part of this word.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:21:49 For example, in Deuteronomy chapter 7:12, I think we see the importance of covenant with this word. There it says,

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgements and keep them, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee covenant and the mercy," *chesed*, "which he sware unto his fathers." So this idea of covenant brings out God's *chesed*. What's interesting to me here is that Naomi is conveying or invoking God's *chesed* on two Moabites. You'd maybe think about, "Oh, this should be Israel." So this is, for me, is one of those first places here where we see that this Abrahamic covenant is to bless all of the families of the world. And we see that, but it doesn't come out very nicely here or cleanly in the English translation. I think that's an important lead on.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:22:51

Now, most of us know the rest of the story, right? Orpah wants to stay with Naomi, but Naomi's going, "No, go home. You've got better chances staying with your people, your family. You've got people to look after you." Those kind of things. But Ruth decides that, no, she is going to stay with Naomi. And it's this decision that brings us to the verse, probably if we know one verse in Ruth, it's this verse, right?

Hank Smith: 00:23:18

Verse 16?

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:23:19

In verse 16. Yeah. "And Ruth said, 'Entreat me not to leave thee, Naomi, or return from following after thee; for whither they goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.'" Right? That's a powerful, powerful verse. You mentioned loyalty here to Naomi. There's something though that I want us to think about with this. A lot of people read this verse and say, "Oh, this is evidence that Ruth converted to the Israelite religion." And honestly, our earliest interpreters, the Jewish targum, do talk about this in terms of a conversion. The difficulty of this is that we really don't know what conversion looks like this early on. I mean, Latter-day Saints have a very definite idea of what conversion means, but I'm not sure that we can take our idea of conversion and just immediately place it on here, especially for a woman.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:24:24

Men, there was kind of circumcision. You've got a ritual that you can go through, but we have no evidence of that for women until much, much later. And honestly, it was assumed that women would assume the gods of their husbands when they married. And so that may have happened when she married Mahlon, but we don't know it. And if we look carefully at what Ruth is saying here, the first commitment, the loyalty primarily here is to Naomi. Right? It's only secondarily to Naomi's God. So this verse is about, "I am going to be with you. I am committing

to you and to look after you, as a daughter would look after her mother, since you have no sons to do that."

- Hank Smith: 00:25:14 What you just described here reminds me of what we studied last year with Emma Smith and Lucy Mack Smith. After Joseph Smith dies and the church goes West, we don't really hear much about Emma and Lucy Mack, but Emma stays with Lucy and takes care of her until she dies.
- John Bytheway: 00:25:31 Yeah.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:25:31 I do want to talk a little bit about how these imagery of bounty and contrasting it with famine has both physical and spiritual implications in the story that we should be seeing. So, for example, Elimelek and his family go to Moab because of the famine in Bethlehem, but it soon becomes a place of barrenness for Naomi. We've said that with the loss of her sons, but that's going to continue on and we're going to see that interchange throughout the book
- Hank Smith: 00:26:03 Gaye, I wanted to say one thing that I want to make sure our listeners didn't miss. Maybe the Lord isn't mentioned often, but he is throughout.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:26:11 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:26:12 He's in the story. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:12 He is. He is in this story. It reminds me of two talks, Elder Bednar's, The Tender Mercies of the Lord. He talks about coincidences being the Lord's hand. And also Elder Rasband gave a talk called By Divine Design. I would ask our listeners to go back if you have a moment this week and look at those talks, because I think the book of Ruth, Gaye is saying here, he may not be mentioned by a name often, but he is definitely there. And Gaye, I don't know if you know this, but the family that started our podcast, right when we started it, the man who started the whole thing passed away, suddenly. Unexpectedly. His name is Steve Sorensen. Absolutely incredible guy. And the family feels like this podcast was something he was meant to do before he died.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:26:57 Go to verse 19 through 21, Naomi and Ruth come back to Bethlehem. I think these verses are really important. And it's not enough in my mind just to read them, these verses, we have to feel. So verse 19. "So they two went until they came to Bethlehem," which in Hebrew means the house of bread. "And

it came to pass when they would come to Bethlehem, that all of the city was moved about. And they said, 'Is this Naomi?'" And notice Naomi's response. Well, this is what we need to feel. "And she said, unto them, "Call me not Naomi," because that word means pleasing. "But call me instead Mara," which means bitterness. And it's a word that's going to come up in the story of Hannah as well. "For the almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out from Bethlehem full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing that the Lord hath testified against me and the almighty hath afflicted me."

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:28:09

Can you feel the anguish in what Naomi is saying here? The beginning of chapter one, we've seen her as a fairly strong woman, but the loss of her husband and her children has taken a tremendous toll upon her. And this is kind of Job-like seeing this window into Naomi, "Why has God done this to me? What have I done wrong that I would be...?" And she's thinking here punished by God. "Why is he doing this to me?" And I think that's really important because the rest of the book is saying that God has not abandoned you Naomi. And the book and what happens here is to show her, even though we don't see the name of God there very often, but everything that is happening here is to say, God is aware of you and of your needs and he's responding to you. And that's where this idea of *chesed* becomes really, really important, I think.

John Bytheway: 00:29:13

I noticed something too, that when the children of Israel led by Moses had the bitter water, they were called the waters of Mara. Is that the same word?

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:29:22

Yep. Same word. Yep.

Hank Smith: 00:29:23

There's a talk from President Eyring, 10 years ago, April of 2012, called Mountains to Climb. He says something similar to what we're reading. He said, "Many of you are now passing through physical, mental, and emotional trials that could cause you to cry out as did one great and faithful servant of God I knew well. His nurse heard him exclaim from his bed of pain, "When I have tried all my life to be good. Why has this happened to me?" And then President Eyring goes on and talks about the tragedies, these mountains, that we face in life. I like what you said here, Gaye, we've got to feel these moments. "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara." If we don't stop and say, "Oh, we are all going to have Ruth chapter one tragedies in our life, and maybe think that God has abandoned us. As you told us from the beginning, Naomi, God has not abandoned you. And to our listeners, God has not abandoned you.

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:30:22 The end of chapter one gives us this idea and another important theme. "So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of the barley harvest." So again, notice this contrast between famine and harvest. And Naomi left Bethlehem because of famine, but has come back at a time of harvest, the time of plenty. But she and Ruth don't have access to that plenty. And so it seems to me that there are two things. Even though in chapter two, Naomi's going to take a bit of a step back, she's still going to orchestrate some events because there are two pressing needs for her and for Ruth. Number one, she's got to find a way to put food on the table. And that's pressing. Right? That's immediate.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:31:21 And so chapter two is going to deal with her and how Ruth is going to be loyal to Naomi and help her. And then the second one, that's going to come more to the fore in chapters three and four is, "How can we have not just immediate food and immediate help?" But she starts looking to the long term security for herself and for Ruth. So that's what the rest of these chapters are looking at. And so, again, even though Naomi's taking a back seat, she's orchestrating events that take place. There's one other thing I'd like to say before we get into chapter two is that this relationship between Naomi and Ruth is a really, really important one. And frankly, it's fairly unique in scriptural text. In most other places where we have two women, we see those women in competition with each other.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:32:20 We've got Sarah and Hagar. We've got Leah and Rachel. In 1st Samuel, we are going to have Hannah and Peninnah. They're in competition with each other. This is one of the... Well, I think the only story in scripture, except maybe for Mary and Elizabeth, where we see two women working together in a common cause. Now, that doesn't mean that I think that Naomi and Ruth are equals. I do still think that Ruth is a servant, and she sees herself as a servant repeatedly in chapter two, but they're still going to work together to help each other survive in this new land.
- Hank Smith: 00:33:03 I haven't read the entire Covenant of Compassion book, Gaye, but did this come up?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:33:08 Yes, I wrote an article on this, with one of my students. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:33:11 Let's talk about the book.
- John Bytheway: 00:33:13 It's called Naomi, Ruth and Boaz: Borders, relationships, Law and Chesed, by Gaye Strathearn and... Is it Angela Cothran?

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:33:20 Yes. In chapter two, Naomi recognizes that they need immediate help of food. And this is one of those places where we see the law of Moses coming through in very, very practical ways. And I think it's really important for us to see how at least some people, not just what the law said, but here we see people who are living and interpreting the law. In Leviticus chapter 19, we're all familiar with the Savior talking about the second great commandment. Well, that second great commandment is in the law of Moses and it comes from Leviticus chapter 19, to love our neighbor as ourselves. In the broader context of that chapter though, it gives some examples of how we look after people and how the law of Moses expected covenant making and covenant keeping people to live that second great commandment.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:34:22 And one of the ways it was is that when the harvest went on, they were specifically told that they were not to cut the corners of the field, that they were to leave that unharvested, so that those who were poor and needy would have access and could come in and glean from that and harvest and get food to support themselves.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:48 That's a fantastic provision.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:34:50 The second part of that is that once the harvesters have gone through, there was often grain that was left behind. And the law of Moses said, "You are not to go back and reharvest. You're to leave that grain on the ground, again, for those in need, who could come through and get food to live by." One of the things I like to see this, as we think about the law of Moses, in an agrarian society, doing this was going to impact the bottom line of the harvest. This would be a real sacrifice that they're making to fulfill the law of Moses. And one of the things I like to say is that this sacrifice was just as important as them taking an animal to the temple, if we are going to understand the law of Moses and what it was trying to do for its people.
- John Bytheway: 00:35:43 I love that you've talked about this because I think if we were to ask most folks how you would characterize the law of Moses, some things that sound strange, you don't see one that talks about make a provision for the poor like this one does so well. I'm glad you mentioned that. And can I just mention that for those looking at paper scriptures, Leviticus 19:9 is footnoted there. It's footnote 2A on Ruth two. And let me just read Leviticus 19:9, "And when you reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather thy gleanings of thy harvest."

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:36:22 And if you look further on in that same chapter, you're going to see the love your neighbor as yourself.
- John Bytheway: 00:36:28 Yeah, that's in verse 34, "But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you and thou shalt love him as thyself: for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord, your God." That's a great verse. Leviticus 19:34.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:36:45 Yeah. Or even 18. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear the grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. I am the Lord.
- John Bytheway: 00:36:56 There it is again. So it's twice in there.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:36:58 Yeah. We see that happening in chapter two. So Ruth here, is not willing to just sit back and say to other people, "You need to look after me." She's willing to go out and to work hard to support herself and Naomi. And so she goes out and it just so happens that she starts harvesting or gleaning in the fields owned by one Boaz. And so he is introduced here, Naomi in verse one has said that he's a kinsman, and this is going back to your discussion about family members. So the word here is just *moda*, which just means a kinsman or relative sometimes. And notice how he's described. I'm going to come back to this, in verse one of chapter two, "Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelek; and his name was Boaz." Right?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:37:53 I'm going to come back to that. So Ruth is out there and she is gleaning. But when Boaz comes and he's asking, "Who is this woman?" He's told who she is. He specifically kind of is really, really impressed of who Ruth is and her commitment to Naomi, and that she's been willing to leave behind her home and her family because of that commitment, and he's really impressed by that. And so he is going then to give her some extra opportunities. So I love this because we see in Boaz, and this is the first opportunity. Boaz doesn't just live the letter of the law. He is very generous in his interpretation of the law. So while he says, "Okay, so we are harvesting, we are leaving the corners." What he tells Ruth, "You know what? You don't have to just harvest from the corners. Why don't you go along with my servants who are doing the harvest and harvest with them?"
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:39:01 So she now has access to all of the grain in the field. He says, "Don't go back there." So she hasn't got to worry about coming behind them and just picking what is left over. Boaz is giving her the opportunity to be right up front and harvesting. The other thing that he says is, "Don't worry about trying to go to other

fields. You just stay here and you work in my fields." So that means she's not losing time traveling from field to field, she can spend all of her time where it's really, really necessary to gather the food that she needs. And then the other thing he does is he says to the young men in language which is really kind of interesting, "Don't you touch her." And one of these words has some sexual overtones. And that highlights, for me, of how that being a gleaner can be a dangerous thing for a foreign woman in a field. Boaz is not just looking after her, he's making sure that his people respect her as well.

- John Bytheway: 00:40:08 Absolutely. So here I'm seeing this generosity from Boaz is easing the pain of the tragedy they've been through in chapter one. See, I love what he says in verse 12. He says, "The Lord recompense thy work; a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:40:30 That's really an important verse. This is Boaz invoking... Like Naomi had earlier, invoking the blessings of the God of Israel upon this Moabite woman.
- John Bytheway: 00:40:42 Again.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:40:43 And the language here is really important because the Hebrew, I think, has some connotations that are really important here. So when it says, "The Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given to by the Lord, under whose wings..." The Hebrew word for wings here is *kanaph*. It's the word used to describe the wings of the cherubim in the temple who surround the covering of the mercy seat. The place where God sits in judgment on Israel, these cherubim are really important because they're reflective of God's mercy in his judgment. And so when we look at this, "Under whose wings," or the mercy that God has. "In whom now has come to trust," and the word here is *hasa*, means to seek refuge.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:41:37 Wings is also important because in Ezekiel, the same word *kanaph* is used in terms of God's covenant kindness and loving. So he's invoking that God's *chesed*... He doesn't use that word here, but his *chesed* is going to be bestowed upon this foreigner as well. Boaz isn't just going to say, "God, you need to do this." He's going to follow it up by the way that he treats her. So Boaz becomes God's arm representing how God loves, even this foreign woman who is destitute. He's going to then invite her to come and sit with everybody else, not just on the periphery, but to sit with the people, have a meal with them. And then he's going to say, "Okay, you've collected all of this grain. I'm going to give you some more grain to take home." And so Ruth is

going to go home with about an ephah of grain, which is about... Anyway, depending how you determine an ephah, is between 20 and 50 pounds of grain, which is more than enough to feed these two women for an extended period of time.

Hank Smith: 00:42:56 Last week, we looked at Samson, and Boaz seems to be almost the exact opposite. Where Samson looks out for himself, Boaz is really generous in looking out for others.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:43:07 Look at verse 20. When Ruth comes home, look how Naomi responds. Or let's start in verse 19. "And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned today? Where wroughtest thou? Blessed be he that did not take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, the man's name with whom I wrought today is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, blessed be he of the Lord." So Boaz is representing God. She recognizes that. "Who has not left off his kindness." Notice that word there, his *chesed*, to the living and the dead. And Naomi said unto her, the man is a near kin of us, one of our next kinsman." There's a shift here in the Hebrew. That's not reflected in the English translation. You recall in chapter two verse one, Naomi said that that was talking about a kinsman.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:44:10 And we mentioned that the word is *moda*, which a relative, but in 20, the word kinsman is a different word. Here, the word is *go'el*, and *go'el*, as the footnote is going to tell us means a redeemer. That Boaz is a redeemer. Now in the ancient word, this was kind of a technical term. A Redeemer was somebody who is responsible for family members in an extended family. And if they get into trouble, then he's there to redeem them. And the word redeem means to buy them out or to pay for them, so that if they're captured in war and they become slaves, a *go'el* would go and pay the price to free the slaves. If they get into debt, into... And so they lose their land, then the Redeemer or the *go'el* would be the person who would go and help them to reclaim that land, which is going to be a very, very important part of chapter four.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:45:11 And I think it would be hard for us to not see the connection that Psalm's talking about that God is our redeemer. He is our *go'el*. And we see Boaz, in terms of acting and doing the things that God would do if he was there, but he's using him as the agent of his *chesed*. And Naomi recognizes that. So this is her first kind of beginning evidence that God has not abandoned her because he understands her need and he sends someone, Boaz, to help her and to redeem her and Ruth.

- Hank Smith: 00:45:50 I love how the writer leaves it up to the reader to see the Lord's hand. She just happened in verse three to be part of the field of Boaz. And here we find out it wasn't just good luck. It was a divine design.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:46:08 Yes. Very nice. So if we move then to chapter three, we are getting a little bit of a shift again. Now Naomi is saying, "Okay, God has responded to this immediate need. Is he also going to respond to the long-term need for security for Naomi and Ruth?" And so Naomi, again, she's going to be in the background, but she's orchestrating things. And so she tells Ruth that you need to go up to the threshing floor. It is a harvest time. She knows that Boaz is going to be there working to take care of the grain that has been harvested. And Naomi says, "Go and wait for a while until he's eaten and he's had his drink and he's ready to go to sleep, but then go and lie at his feet," which is a stratagem. There's no doubt about it.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:47:03 She's wanting to be a matchmaker here in important ways. So look at chapter three verse eight, "And it came to pass at midnight that the man was afraid and turned himself." Now, the word afraid here can mean he shivered or he shuttered. So does that mean he's cold? Because the blankets aren't on his feet or something like that, but something happens and he wakes up and he sees Ruth at his feet. "And he said unto her, who art thou? And she answered and said, I am Ruth thine handmade." And handmaid here means servant or slave. "And then she asks, "Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman." Thou art a *go'el*. Now, the word here... Again, this is interesting in the Hebrew, the word skirt here is the Hebrew word *kanaph*. It's the same word that is used back in chapter two, translated as wings.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:48:11 And so in effect what Ruth is saying, "Okay, you have invoked God to look after us to be a place of refuge for us to be a place of mercy. Will you be the instrument in God's hands to do that? Because you are a *go'el*. And then notice how Boaz responds to her. "And he said, 'Blessed art thou of the Lord, my daughter; for thou hast shewed more kindness..." Guess what the word is here.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:45 *chesed*
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:48:45 This is *chesed*. In the latter end than at the beginning. So what he's saying here is... So she's got an early *chesed* and a later *chesed*. So the early *chesed* is the way that she has looked after her mother-in-law after the death of her husband and children. And now, because your *chesed* is that you... He's saying, "For

thou hast not followed the young men, whether poor or rich. Now, there's a change in language here as well. Right? Earlier, we've had young men and they've all been referred to the word is *naarai*. But when he uses it here, the young men, he's using *bahirim* or the chosen ones. What I think he's saying is there are plenty of people you could have married. Choice young men, some of them even wealthy. "So why are you coming after me?" Right?

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:49:45 But this is because of your *chesed*. The *chesed* that you Ruth have, that you are wanting to think long-term, not just in terms of what's important for you as an individual but what's important for Naomi because of the oath that you have made to her. I think that's really important. And then verse 11.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:07 He's impressed by her commitment to Naomi.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:50:12 Yes. Yep.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:13 And how she doesn't put her own situation above that, of Naomi's or in front of Naomi's.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:50:20 Right. But again, it's this *chesed* here, right? Is that she becomes the example of God's loving kindness as well. So it's Boaz is an example of God's *chesed*, but Ruth is also an important way that God is showing Naomi that he has not abandoned her.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:40 "God has abandoned me," but Ruth's with her the whole time.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:50:43 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:44 And that's kind of a symbol that God has been with her the whole time.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:50:47 But you have to have eyes to see sometimes the hand of God in our lives. Right? And then we go to verse 11, where Boaz is going to shift things a little bit, and says, "And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest." "I will be your *go'el*," he's saying. "For all of the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." Now I want to kind stop here and pick up something that I introduced before. The word that is translated as virtuous here is *hayil*. You've got to get that same [foreign sound]. And it's exactly the same word that is used back in chapter two verse one, where Boaz described as a mighty man of wealth. But it's the word *hayil*.

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:51:38 So at least in some level here, the person telling us the story is trying to show that even though there are lots of differences between Boaz and Ruth, there's wealth, there's position, there's prestige, all of those kind of things. But the narrator here is saying, but both of these people have exhibit this *hayil*, which is virtuous. When we're talking about a woman, we say virtue; when we're talking about a man we're talking about wealth, right? But they're the same things. So that these two are equally yoked, even though they come from very, very different social and economic backgrounds.
- Hank Smith: 00:52:24 So this looks like something else that's lost in the English, because... You're saying Ruth 2:1, Boaz is described as a mighty man of wealth, same word as chapter three verse 11, "All the people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." Same word, and so they're matched. I love that. But you lose it in the English completely.
- John Bytheway: 00:52:48 I think we use virtue usually for a comment on chastity or something. And thinking about Jesus, when he said, "I perceived that virtue has gone out of me," when the woman touched his garment. It's bigger than just chastity, it's power.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:53:06 And in fact, in the New Testament, the word is *arete* for virtue, oftentimes. And *arete* is a military term, which talks about somebody who's willing to go to battle and is willing to keep going to battle even though everybody around them is falling off or running away, because the person believes in the cause for which they're fighting. That's what virtue means from a Greek perspective. So a part of it might be chastity, but you're right. It is a much broader umbrella of terms.
- Hank Smith: 00:53:42 I'm interested in this word, because in Section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord mentions... Section 88 verse 40, "Intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence, wisdom receiveth wisdom, truth embraces truth, virtue loves virtue. And we see that playing out between Ruth and Boaz that they're being drawn together because they're alike.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:54:04 And it reinforces again, there are plenty of other people you could have married, but you've chosen here, right? And again, Naomi, I think recognizes that and she's kind of matchmaking this situation going through.
- John Bytheway: 00:54:19 I think I've said that same thing to my wife, but I am not a mighty man of wealth.

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:54:25 But you can be...
- John Bytheway: 00:54:26 It's inexplicable.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:54:27 The word there, *hayil*, means that it hasn't got to be wealth, right? There's other things than just wealth. Okay. The rest of chapter three then is going to be an example, again, of how Boaz becomes an instrument in the hands of God, living the law of Moses, but doing it in a much expanded way. So he comes back to this idea of *go'el*. Ruth is interesting here because it's going to connect aspects of the law of Moses that we don't see connected anywhere else. Right? So he's going to be a *go'el*, but he's also going to redeem the land of Naomi, and he's going to be willing to enter into something called a Levirate marriage with Ruth. So a Levirate marriage meant that if a couple married and the husband dies and there's no children, then one of the sons is obligated to marry his brother's wife to raise up seed unto the brother who had died.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:55:46 Now that's, again, in an agrarian kind of thing where it's important for names to live on, posterity to live on. It's also dealing with land inheritance, which usually went through the male son with some exceptions. Some women had to fight for that. The daughters of Zelophehad. I think I said that right. That's the responsibility. And usually when it's talked about in the law of Moses, it's a brother who's living on the same farm or the same land or whatever. But Boaz says here, "I am a kinsman, but there's somebody closer who has more of an obligation to do this than me." And so Boaz goes and says, "I want to give him the first opportunity to do that." And this kinsman, when he's thinking, "Oh, I get Naomi's land is thinking, oh, I like this idea."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:56:44 But when it's now tied to marrying Ruth, he says, "Yeah, I don't think I want to do that because that's going to impact my inheritance for my children. So I'm not going to do it. No, thanks." And he takes off his shoe, which was one of the symbol ways of saying that I'm not going to do that. And it's then that Boaz steps up and says, "Okay, I'm not worried about inheritance. I'm not worried about the financial implications. I will do for you what the law says to look after you and the posterity." And this is looking after Naomi. "I'm going to marry Ruth so that Naomi can be looked after," which I think is a really, really powerful, wonderful idea that's going on.
- John Bytheway: 00:57:33 But this same kind of marriage tradition comes up in the New Testament. Doesn't it? When the Sadducees approach Jesus and say, "There were among us a man who had... And the husband

died and then she married the brother." So that's the same thing.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:57:46 Yeah. That's what's happening. Yeah. That's what he's referring to.

Hank Smith: 00:57:50 Is the idea that someone turns that down the obligation. Isn't that going to cause you some social repercussions, if you turn down your obligation?

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:57:57 Yeah, it is saying something about the person. Yeah. Well, Boaz has said to Naomi and to Ruth, "I'm willing to step up and do this, but I need to check with this person first."

John Bytheway: 00:58:08 Kind of demonstrates Boaz's what would you say? Integrity and trying to do the right thing here, trying to...

Hank Smith: 00:58:15 Trying to follow the law?

John Bytheway: 00:58:17 Trying to follow the law. Yeah.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:58:18 But again, not just follow the letter of the law. He is being very, very generous in his interpretation of how the law is being used here. Which, again, I think is really important understanding Boaz.

John Bytheway: 00:58:34 It's almost so far, I'm seeing that loyalty and generosity are a major part of God's economy. The way he wants us to behave - to be loyal and generous. So this guy, whoever he is, the next kinsman declines, and sounds like that hopefully is what Boaz wanted to have happen.

Hank Smith: 00:58:52 And Ruth.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:58:53 We're now into the concluding parts of book of Ruth in chapter four. So Boaz is going to step up and he is going to marry Ruth and Ruth is going to have a child. She's going to become pregnant and have a child. And then I just want to pick it up in verses 13, just to set it up. "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife, and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception." So this is the second place where we see God in action. "And she bear a son. And the women said unto Naomi, blessed be the Lord which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman," without a *go'el*. "... That his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life." Notice the contrast of when she first comes to Bethlehem and the

bitterness and things that she's feeling there, a restorer of their life.

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:59:57 And I think that life could be physical life, but also lifestyle kind of thing, "... And a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. And Naomi took the child and laid it on her bosom and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors, gave it a name, saying, there is a son born to Naomi." That's really, really interesting, right? Because the son is born to Ruth. But again, this is evidence that God has not abandoned Naomi, and this is God's way of answering her plea and her bitterness that she was feeling in chapter one, because now Naomi and Elimelek's name or lineage or family would continue on. It was not destroyed. And then the really important part. So Naomi then is the great, great grandmother of David, which is the way that this all concludes showing that this story is about pointing to and the greatness that David would eventually have as king.
- Hank Smith: 01:01:18 And also is going to play into Matthew chapter one. Yes.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 01:01:20 Absolutely.
- John Bytheway: 01:01:21 Those are the footnotes there when it goes into that and it... I was looking at that before we started today and it spells Boaz, Booz, B-O-O-Z, in Matthew one for some reason.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 01:01:32 Well, that's just a reflection of the Greek transliteration of Greek, whereas this is Hebrew. So that's the difference.
- John Bytheway: 01:01:39 Nice to know. This is talking about Boaz and Ruth.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 01:01:42 I hope as through our discussion here, we've got a feel for the richness of this wonderful, wonderful book of scripture. This book of scripture is so much more than just chapter one verse 16. I hope that all of us are seeing a little bit of Naomi, a little bit of Ruth, and even a little bit of Boaz in each of us. These three are working together in concert to bring about God's blessings for his people. No one of them does it alone, but they have to work together. This is a great story of men and women working together. This is a great story of women standing shoulder to shoulder to bring about the purposes of God. This is about people, real people like you and I, who aren't perfect people. They don't have an idyllic life, but they live their life. And in spite of the difficulties they have, they're trying to do the things of God.

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 01:02:50 And are there times when they're thinking God's abandoned me? Absolutely. I've experienced that. I think we all have experienced that, but this reminds us again, that God is always in the details. And if we can have faith in him, not just in the moment, but in the long term that we will see the hand of God in our lives, if we have eyes to see. But sometimes it's something that we really have to look for. Just as we can't just read the book of Ruth casually, we've got to ask questions and say, "Why is this happening? And why is it being said this way? Why is the book being set up in this manner?" Because it's moving us as readers to see how powerful God is and his great *chesed* for his people, that is most often made known to people through the lives and actions of other covenant making and covenant keeping people.
- Hank Smith: 01:03:49 Gaye, you and Elder Uchtdorf think a lot alike. He said... This is from the March, 2019 Liahona, "On a future day, you will look back on this cherished and exciting adventure of mortality, and you will understand. You will see that the dots really did connect into a beautiful pattern, more sublime than you ever could have imagined. With unspeakable gratitude you will see that God himself in his abounding love, grace and compassion was always there watching over you, blessing you and guiding your steps as you walked toward him." I think this is absolutely inspiring, John.
- John Bytheway: 01:04:29 You know what? This reminds me of last year. It became, because of our podcast, one of my favorite verses, is Section 58 verse three, "You cannot behold with your natural eyes for the present time the design of your God concerning those things which will come here after." And that kind of coincides with what Gaye said or what Elder Uchtdorf said that, "I've got this. And you won't see it right now, but I'm taking care of you."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 01:04:56 We all have questions, and I have a gazillion questions and I don't have the answers to all of them. But I know that God does, but he's got to prepare me to be able to get to a place where I can understand and see as he sees and understand what he sees. And I really do think that's what faith is all about. That's why you hang on. If you have faith, it doesn't mean you don't have questions. It just means that you're going to keep going with your questions until the time where God can reveal himself to us in powerful ways.
- John Bytheway: 01:05:32 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:02 Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 Gaye, let's transition over to the book of I Samuel. I read this in the church's Come Follow Me manual. We've talked about Ruth and Naomi, but it says also, can you see yourself in the story of Hannah? Maybe like Hannah, you long for blessings you have not yet received. Ponder what messages you can learn from the example of this faithful woman. I'm excited to talk about Hannah with you, Gaye, and to share about her.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:35 As I mentioned earlier, we've got two books here who are starting with very ordinary women, but who are in distress because of their barrenness. With Naomi, it was because her children had been taken from her, but with Hannah, it was because she hadn't been able to conceive and bear any children. There are plenty of women who experience this today. As an outsider, you can think you've got a husband or whatever, but this is a reminder of the very, very real and very, very deep emotional burden that infertility can have on a woman, and especially in the ancient world where men had more wives, they could get their children in other means, but for a woman not to have children, was absolutely devastating. I think of Rachel in Genesis 31, the depth of her cry out to Jacob when she says, "Give me children or else I die."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 01:49 Again, you've got to feel what those words are and what it means for somebody to be in this kind of position, because marriage and children was what gave women their sense of status and worth in the ancient world. Even though you've got someone here with Hannah, who is married and she has a husband, and that's good, but even that doesn't compensate for the loss of not having a child. What I'm really interested in here is, why start with this story? I think there is so much more going on than just saying, "Oh, God blesses her so that she can have Samuel and then we can get into the important stuff." These first three chapters are really very cleverly powerfully put together that like in the book of Ruth here, there's lots of things going on that caught up in this experience of Hannah.

- Hank Smith: 02:51 Gaye, I've noticed probably more this year than any other in the Old Testament, moms come up over and over again. They don't even want to tell you about someone without telling you about their mother, so far. With Isaac and with Jacob, and then even Moses' mother is highlighted, is that a cultural thing? Is that we're a family? If I'm an Israelite reader, am I thinking, "It always starts with a mother?"
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 03:17 Well, I think so, because this is important, especially later in Judaism, it's the mother who is going to be the connection to Judaism. It probably has very practical reasons, you can tell pretty clearly who the mother is. It's sometimes more difficult to know the father in the situation.
- John Bytheway: 03:36 Not only was Abram's name changed to Abraham, Sarai's name was changed to Sarah. I want to remember that when I talk about the Abrahamic Covenant that it was Abraham and Sarah that made that all possible.
- Hank Smith: 03:49 I've never seen how often before they introduce someone, they tell us about the person's mother.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 03:55 Let's set the scene here in chapter one. We're introduced to a man by the name of Elkanah and he is married to Hannah. Some scholars are going to argue that Hannah was the first wife, so the primary wife. Probably because of her barrenness, he marries again, similar to Sarah and Hagar, so that Elkanah can have children. This family lives in Ramah, which is a ways away from Shiloh. That's the other place that we need to know about. Shiloh is the place of the tabernacle. So when Israel first conquered the land of Canaan, there was no Jerusalem originally, but Shiloh, in the land of Sumeria, was set up as the place of the tabernacle. That's where the temple was from, that's where the priests were and things like that. Elkanah, we learn, is going to go up every year. He's going to leave Ramah and go on pilgrimage and is going to go to the temple there. Then in verse five, we learned that Elkanah loved Hannah, but that she was barren.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 05:05 The Lord had shut up her womb. Notice again we've talked about the competition between women in the biblical text, verse six, "And her adversary," and we are talking here now about Peninnah, "Also provoked Hannah, sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb." This seems to be something like in Hagar, "You might be the primary wife, but I've got the kids and I'm going to rub that in when I can." That's an important part of this story in helping us to understand what Hannah is experiencing through this process. If you go to verse

seven, "And as he, Elkanah, did year by year, Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, so Peninnah provoked her, therefore she wept and did not eat." So this situation is tough for Hannah to be in. How does Elkanah respond to this? I can understand him doing this, saying, "Am I not better to thee than 10 sons?" I can understand that he's trying to comfort her, I'm just not sure how comforting that might have been to Hannah.

John Bytheway: 06:16

I know. I look at that and I think my wife would go, "Let me get back to you on that."

Hank Smith: 06:22

Gaye, you just really summarized my life there. I get what you're trying to do, but it's really not that helpful.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 06:30

And then these kind of experiences, home life experience and the anxiety that comes from that, is going to be accelerated or intensified when she goes up to the temple and we are introduced to Eli, who is the priest. So verse nine, "Now, Eli, the priest, sat upon the seat by a post of the temple of the Lord. And she, Hannah, was in bitterness." That's that word that we talked about with Naomi, mara, bitter, the same word. She was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the Lord and wept sore. She vowed a vow, "Oh, Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid servant, and remember me and not forget thine handmaid, but will give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all of the days of his life and there shall be no razor come upon his head." What she's doing here is saying, I think that this is really interesting, because she desperately wants a son, but it seems to me she doesn't want the son for herself.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 07:44

I don't think she wants the son necessarily for the status of it, but she wants to contribute to the work of the Lord. She sees the bearing of a son as one way that she can be a part of this great work of God on earth. I just think that that's really, really important. We could read this in terms of a selfish post, but she's saying, "Lord, I want a son, not so that I can say to Peninnah, 'Na, na, na, na, na, na,' back to her, but so that I can find a way to serve thee." But what's interesting the contrast here, and we're going to see this contrast going throughout these chapters, is that Eli is the priest. He's supposed to be the righteous one.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 08:31

He's the one who represents God, there shall be no razor come upon his head. Hannah is saying is that, she is going to offer her son as part of a Nazarite vow. A Nazarite vow, was a way for a non-priest to dedicate themselves to God for a period of time. Sometimes it's a lifetime thing, but it can be for shorter times,

where they dedicate their work to God, the aim that therefore, that period of the vow, that they can become holy. The word here is kadosh, which is the only way that the holiness of God is described. For a short period of time, they can become holy like God. So that's taking us back to Leviticus, where in chapter 11 and chapter 19, God is saying, "So why am I giving you all of this law of Moses stuff? My aim is, that you may become holy, kadosh, like I am holy, kadosh." All of those rules and regulations that we can sometimes get so caught up on, if we miss that aspect of it, then we've missed something really, really important.

- Hank Smith: 09:49 I like what you said here, Gaye, that Hannah's not looking to get back at anyone, wrote by verse 11, she wants to contribute to this work.
- John Bytheway: 09:58 It wasn't purely just a selfish desire, it was, "I want to help." She didn't say, "Give me a son so I can ... "
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 10:06 Stop all of these, people mocking me. Look at how Eli responds, now, this supposedly righteous person, verse 12, "And it came to pass as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth." The word here means, he watched. She's praying silently, but she's mouthing the words as she goes, and what's his interpretation? "Oh, this woman must be drunk." He chastises her a little bit, "How long wilt thou not be drunk and put away thy wine from thee." She's being chastised here, unrighteously, but notice how she responds to a priesthood leader misjudging her.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 10:54 Hannah answered and said, "No, my Lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit, I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Please don't count thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial." Now I'm going to stop and emphasize that, because it's going to come up later in the next chapter, "For out of abundance of my complaint and grief, have I spoken this." You're pouring out your soul at the temple and somebody comes and says, "I don't think you should be here, you're drunk and what." But she responds with, this declaration of faith and her continued hope that, again, God has not forgotten her, but is aware of her needs and her heartaches and her feelings of bitterness, or mara.
- Hank Smith: 11:54 Gaye, this is so important. How often are we going to be in a miserable situation and someone who should be helping us, does something offensive?
- John Bytheway: 12:02 Misjudged.

- Hank Smith: 12:03 She could be done right now. Here's this religious leader who's supposed to be good to you and says something offensive, that seems like enough to go, "You know what? I'm done with all these people." People are going to say offensive things, even priesthood leaders.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 12:17 Let me tell you a story about me and my mom, where I've learned this principal and it's had rippling effects on my life in very, very important ways. I was in the eighth grade at high school, and in Australia, that's the first year of high school. Something had happened at school that really upset me and I came home and I was in tears, I was sobbing. I walked in the door and mom knew that something was wrong with me and so she came up, "What's the matter?" She took me into my room, we sat on the bed, she put her arm around me, and I tried to explain to her what it was. I don't even remember what it is now. She listened to me and consoled me for about, oh, I don't know, a minute-and-a half. You got to know my mom, she's wonderful and I love her. Then she just stopped and said to me, "Gaye, that's enough. Stop crying."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 13:07 Then she said this, "You didn't come to this earth to live with perfect people, so get over it." As I've thought about that, over the years, I think what she might have been saying is, "You ain't so perfect yourself, so don't expect it in other people until you're doing it." But it's this idea, I've loved this idea and I've treasured that idea. I expect other people to be perfect, but I want to be treated with mercy, because I know I'm not perfect, but why can't we see that we're all in this journey together and none of us are going to do things perfectly right. We're trying, but we make mistakes, and we've got to give people some grace, as we see them, because they do things a little bit differently or don't do things perfectly. In this case, for Eli, this is our first glimpse that perhaps all is not well with Eli as the spiritual leader of Israel at this point, because he doesn't recognize the spiritual turmoil that Hannah is experiencing.
- Hank Smith: 14:15 We're going to find out later he himself is struggling.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 14:18 That becomes an important part of these first three chapters.
- Hank Smith: 14:22 I really like Hannah's response here. We often talk about Pahoran's response to Moroni, but we should maybe bring up Hannah's response to Eli as often as we bring up that Book of Mormon story.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 14:33 So in verse 19, "She's been to the temple, they rose up in the morning and worship before the Lord and returned and came to

the house of Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah, his wife, and the Lord remembered her," and I think that that's really important. I think then if we jump down to verse 22, Elkanah is going to continue to go up to the temple, but Hannah goes not up, for she said unto her husband, "I will not go up until the child be weaned and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord and there abide forever."

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 15:09 Now, again, I can't even imagine what Hannah is going through, at this point. I wonder, the text doesn't say it, but I'd love when I get upstairs to track her down and ask her if she ever had second thoughts about this vow that she has made. I wonder if she's thinking with that child in her arms, "How can I give him up? I have longed, I have waited so long, the Lord finally hears me. Can I really send him off to Shiloh, to a totally different city, to be in the temple? Where it seems that the people were aware, that not all was well in the priesthood at the temple.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 15:57 "Maybe I should just keep him home, maybe I should just keep him away from the wickedness that I hear about going on." Now, I'm presuming. None of this is in the text, but as I try to put myself in her shoes, I imagine that those were maybe some of the questions that I would be considering. When she says, "Yeah, I'm not going to go up to the temple this year, give me a little bit longer with him," I can understand, maybe the tension, that she's struggling with at this point. But ultimately, ultimately, her vow is what wins through for her.
- Hank Smith: 16:36 Does anybody else even know she's made this vow?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 16:39 I don't know, because she said it in her heart.
- Hank Smith: 16:42 This displays her integrity even more so, thinking, "Well, no one besides God knows about this vow," but she remembers. This is over in verse 27, "For this child I prayed and the Lord hath given me my petition, which I asked him, as long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 16:59 The word lent is interesting, because the word can mean to lend, as in, "I'm giving him too for a period of time," honestly, this was going to be for his entire life. But it can also mean to consecrate him, to entrust him to the Lord. There is some irony there that entrusting him to the Lord, means entrusting him to Eli, and Eli isn't going to be the perfect role model, but trusting in the Lord that in spite of the environment, that it will ultimately be the best thing for Samuel.

- John Bytheway: 17:33 Can you talk about what this means in this time and place in culture? She's basically saying, "You, now will be the one to raise him, not me anymore." She's taking him someplace, dropping him off. Is that what's happening?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 17:47 He's going to belong to the temple. He's going to be a servant of the temples.
- John Bytheway: 17:51 And he will stay there, live there, be taught there, from now on.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 17:55 He's going to come of age, and as we look at the 1 Samuel, we are going to see him not in the temple for the rest of his life, as he gets his prophetic call, that we'll talk about, but he is going to set up a judgment in Ramah, so he's going to go to his hometown and people are going to come to him to get his insight and his judgment and those kind of things. But he will be there until at least he comes of age until the work of the Lord takes him elsewhere.
- Hank Smith: 18:23 I know this isn't intended in the text, but 1 Samuel 1:28, "He'll be lent to the Lord." I have a good neighbor, he said once sending a child on a mission, he said, "I didn't know the private pain of sending a child on a mission." He said, "It's been more painful than I thought it would be." John, you can speak to that. This idea of like, "Okay, there she goes, off to Tahiti."
- John Bytheway: 18:46 Oh, and when you learn that they're having a bad week or a bad day, and you're not there, I hadn't heard it described that way, private pain, but you pray for their companions. You pray for their mission presidents. You pray for their circumstances.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 19:03 I love chapter two, and especially the early parts of this, because we are getting an insight into how Hannah feels. We've talked about how difficult this must have been, but chapter two opens up with her singing praises to God, and I love this. I think about Mary being told that she's going to be the mother of the son of God and all of the thinking about the costs that involves, but then her Magnificat where she praises God, I see Hannah doing something here, and so I love this. Maybe we can read at least a little bit of it. Hannah prayed and said, My heart rejoices in the Lord. Mine horn," and this is an image for power that will come up again, "My horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies because I rejoice in salvation. There is none Holy kadosh as the Lord, for there is none beside him, neither is there any rock like our God.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 20:10 Talk no more so exceedingly proudly. Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him, actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken and they that stumbled are girded with strengths." So notice we've got these opposites going on. The people who are normally thought to be in power, the ones that have meaning, but God is going to turn things upside down and he's going to pick someone like Hannah, who's a nowhere person, or Mary from a nowhere, podunk place, and he's going to use people. The world doesn't recognize the strength in them, but God does, and he will use them in his work.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 20:52 "They that are full, have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry ceased so that the barren have born seven and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The Lord killeth and make us alive. He bringeth us down to the grave and he bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. He bringeth low and he lifteth up. He raises up the poor out of the dust. Then he lifteth the beggar from the dunghill." I love this in terms of she's talking about those people who are in the margins of society, the world might not be aware of them, but God will, and he will reach out and he will help them. They will have a work to do and a part to play in this kingdom of God that he's establishing. I think Hannah sees herself as part of those marginalized, but who God has reached out to and helped showing that she can also be of use to God and his kingdom.

Hank Smith: 21:51 Is this a song?

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 21:52 Yes.

John Bytheway: 21:53 Okay. You mentioned Mary and what we sometimes call the Magnificat, my soul doth magnify the Lord. She just goes on and on not about how great she is, but how great God is and that's what Hannah is doing here too. I think Nephi does it too in 2 Nephi 4. "I know in whom I have trusted," and then he talks about how wonderful God is.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 22:14 That's what I mentioned briefly before is at the end of 2 Samuel, David is going to also offer up a Psalm, and it is very much tied to this using some of the same motifs about God being the rock and all of that, so this is tying Hannah with David as well.

Hank Smith: 22:35 Now, we're going to get to the problems in Eli's house. Is that right?

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 22:38 Yes. Here we got the contrast between a mother and her son, young son, and the priest and his children.
- John Bytheway: 22:46 I know I'm looking at verse 12. I'm looking at Hannah saying in verse 16, "Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial." How did you say it, Gaye?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 22:56 I said Belial, but I'm an Australian, so I probably got it wrong.
- John Bytheway: 23:00 But then it says in Samuel 2:12, "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 23:06 Yes. That, again, hearkens to Eli is that he can't see, well, spiritually, he's not perceptive. He's willing to see Hannah as being worthless, good for nothing. That's what the word Belial means, although, in the dead sea scrolls, it does become a term for Satan, but he can't see it in his own children, and so we are coming through this. What is it that his children, what's the evidence that his children are going to be very, very different that the contrast to what we see with Samuel? Well, verse 12 through 16, the evidence of their unrighteousness and the fact that they are sons of Belial is that they're taking the temple sacrifices and abusing them. Now, in any temple sacrifice, part of the animal was offered up to God, and so that becomes the burnt offering. Part of the animal was also given to the priests. That's how they survived and fed their families. But then the rest of the animal was to be given back to the family who was offering the sacrifice, and that's how they eat meat.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 24:16 It's probably one of the few times they're eating meat, but the sons of Eli are abusing that, and so that they're taking greater portions of the meat; therefore, they're taking it away from the people who are offering the sacrifice. So they're enriching themselves on the sacrifice of others. That's the first thing. How do we see that judged? Verse 15? "Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord." Then if we go to verse 22, "Now Eli was very old and heard all that his sons did unto Israel, and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." So here's the second reason that they're not upstanding, doing what a priest should be doing and the Levites. He said unto them, "Why do ye do such things for I hear of your evil doings by all of this people. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear ye make the Lord's people to transgress."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 25:21 That's the second place where we see these things going on, but what happens, verse 25, "They hearkened not unto the voice of their father." This is setting up the events that are going to take

place later on in 1 Samuel. Then if we jump down to verse 29, now we have a man of God is coming and he's also going to condemn Eli's sons, and he says, verse 29, "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at my offering, which I have commanded in my habitation, and Eli, you honourest your sons above me to make yourselves fat with the cheapest of all of the offerings of my people." Now, this is another example of this idea that all is not well, not just with his sons, but with Eli. I hope that we'll contrast that with Hannah, who's willing to, even though I think every fiber of her being is saying, "Keep my son and let me, look after him," and who's going to honor God more than her personal desires, but contrast Eli, he honors the sons of above me as God. These are all setting the theme for what I think happens.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 26:38

Eli is told his sons are going to die. He's going to die. There's going to be some repercussions for this sinning in the temple. That leads us up to chapter three, and this for me is one of my favorite parts. I love the imagery and what's going on here, as we see Samuel as a child coming into the temple, and notice it's not just what happens, but how the author chooses to portray this. I want you to notice the light darkness theme. That's going to be a theme that comes up very much in the gospel of John. Jesus is the light of the world, but notice the darkness that's happening as Samuel is serving with Eli. I can imagine that some people listening and reading this and thinking about Eli, seeing his sons and their wickedness and feeling, "I can't always control once these children become of age, they use their agency and they make their choices, and there's not a whole lot that I can do as a parent, even as adults, try to teach them and work with them," and those kind of things.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 27:46

I love this quote from President Hinckley. It's an oldie, but I think it's a goodie in, "Behold Your Little Ones" in 1978 ensign. He says, "I recognize that there are parents who, notwithstanding an outpouring of love and a diligent and faithful effort to teach them, see their children grow in a contrary manner and weep while their wayward sons and daughters willfully pursue courses of tragic consequence. For such I have great sympathy, but such is the exception, rather than the rule, nor does the exception justify others of us from making every effort in showing forth love, example and correct precept in the rearing of those, for whom God has given a sacred responsibility." I think the issue here with Eli is that through his own choices, he becomes complicit in what his children are doing. That's why I think the Lord's judgment is upon Eli as well as his sons.

- Hank Smith: 29:01 Maybe I'm seeing something that's not here, but I noticed that when Eli talks to his sons, he's very concerned about what the people think, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people." It does seem that Eli, when you're saying he's complicit in this, isn't overly, maybe I shouldn't say he isn't overly concerned with what they're doing, but how it looks publicly. I notice as a parent, that's when I get into trouble is when I'm more concerned with how my children's behavior looks publicly on me than actually what the real issue is, and the unfulfilled needs that they have in their life, perhaps, that's causing the behavior, whatever it is when I'm more concerned about my reputation-
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 29:44 I want to go back to verse 29, where the man come from God, that Eli honors his sons above God. Whereas, again, Hannah, it's the opposite here, so we've got the contrast coming through here. I love chapter three and seeing the coming of age of Samuel, but I also love the way that the author is setting this up. It's not just what they say, but how they say it that's painting a picture that I think is important for us to see. Verse one, "And the child, Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli." Now, I want you to notice the recurrence of themes of light and darkness that are in this chapter. It's something that's really important in John's gospel, and I hope that we are thinking about Jesus being the light of the world and that darkness is the absence of light. The word of the Lord was precious at this time, and the word here means it's scarce, that God isn't talking to his people in those days and there was no open vision.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 30:53 The idea here is vision or revelation, but I hope that you are appreciating that in order for us to see physically or spiritual, we need light to be able to see. "And it came to pass at that time when Eli was laid down in his place and his eyes began to wax dim." Physically, he's not seeing as well as he used to do so he could not see, but I think the author here is saying, "Yeah, he's got physical deficits with vision, but these are reflective of the much more important spiritual deficits that he has." "And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord." Again, I want you to think, don't think in terms of modern ideas of you turn on a light and the light is brilliant and you can see everything and there's no shadows. I want you to imagine here, this is a candle and candles convey light, but it's a flickering kind of light. There's still darkness there and it pierces the darkness, but it doesn't get rid of the darkness.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 31:59 So this idea of light in the temple, it's gone out, it's now night, so there's no light in the temple of the Lord where the arc of God was and Samuel was laid down to sleep, again, darkness.

"And the Lord called to Samuel," and I want to stop here and say the name Samuel means God hears. I think Hannah did that because this child was because God hears. But in this chapter, we see Samuel as one who hears God, which I think is very, very important to see. "The Lord called to Samuel and he answered and said, Here am I." The word is *hineni*. This is just, yes. But it also in other places in scriptures has this sense of yes with an intensesness that I'm willing to listen to. I think if we think in terms of Moses where Jesus is going to say to God, "Behold, here am I." Certainly, when Isaiah is called to be a prophet of God, he uses this word *hineni*.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 33:08

This is this sense here that even as a young child, Samuel is willing to listen, but he didn't understand. He hasn't had experiences with God yet, and Eli is the one who is charged to help him see and to hear and to recognize which I think is some irony. You know the story, he runs to Eli and said, "Here am I, for thou has called me." Eli said, "I didn't call you go back to sleep." He said, "Okay," and he goes back to bed. The Lord called yet again, Samuel, and Samuel jumped up again and went to Eli and he says, "Here am I, you did call me." He said, "No, I didn't. Go back to bed." Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him. He's young, he's learning. "And the Lord called a third time. And he arose up and went to Eli and said, Here am I." Now, Eli whose spiritual and physical dimness recognizes what's going on here.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 34:14

He is able to say to him, "Go lie down, and it shall be. If he call thee, that thou shalt say, speak Lord for thy servant heareth." Samuel went and laid down in his place and the Lord came and stood and called, as at other times, "Samuel, Samuel," then Samuel answered and said, "Speak, for thy servant heareth." Now, it's not happenstance, that this is happening in the tabernacle, the place where when God comes to earth, he chicanes, he dwells. It's not his permanent dwelling. He dwells in the temple in heaven, but when he comes to earth, he comes to the temple. This is him perhaps understanding that Samuel needs more than Eli, even though Eli is going to play a part here, but he's coming directly to Samuel so that he can teach him as he goes on. The Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of everyone that heareth, it shall tingle. In that day, I will perform against Eli."

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 35:22

Now, again, Samuel's young, but the Lord thinks he's mature enough to take this judgment, that he's letting Samuel know about the judgment against Eli, "All the things that I have spoken concerning his house when I begin, and I will also make an end, for I have told him that I will judge his house forever for

the iniquity that which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not," so here's the second reason why this judgment is on Eli as well. "And therefore I have sworn under the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever, and Samuel lay until it was morning," so light, "and opened the doors of the house of the Lord." You can imagine that Samuel was afraid to tell Eli this judgment. I wouldn't want to be doing it, especially a young child, but Eli wanted to know, and so he told him.

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 36:18 Then we get verse 19, very similar to what Luke says about Jesus, "And Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and did let none of his words fall to the ground, and all Israel for Dan, even to Beersheba," so there are geographical terms to know that we're talking all of Israel, not just tribes of Israel, "knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord, and that the Lord appeared again in Shiloh." I think that's just the Lord has returned to his temple, not because of Eli and his sons, but because of this young child, Samuel. Light has now returned to Israel. Temple is now functioning again because of Samuel. One of the things I love about Samuel is even though there were prophets prior to Samuel in both Third Nephi and also in Acts, they talk about the time of the prophets from Samuel. Samuel is identified as the beginning of the prophetic tradition in Israel.
- Hank Smith: 37:29 Yeah, because in the Book of Judges you didn't really see that this type of person, but after this, we're going to see Elijah and Elijah and Isaiah and these prophetic figures. This is great, Gaye. I feel bad for Eli. Should I?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 37:43 Absolutely, we should.
- Hank Smith: 37:45 His response to Samuel is, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," in verse 18 he's saying, "Yes, I'm aware. I know." I'm glad it's okay to feel bad for Eli here, Gaye.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 37:58 Well, we have to, because there are plenty of times that the Lord is going to call us to account for the things that we haven't done as well.
- Hank Smith: 38:08 It's important that the Lord have boundaries. I can hear someone reading this, being uncomfortable with what Samuel is saying about Eli's house, but it's going to be between the Lord and Eli.

John Bytheway: 38:19 Right, because I think we feel bad for Lehi. We feel bad for Nephi when I couldn't keep the family together, when he's mad with his brothers. As we've talked about there, Eli seems to be complicit to some degree at the end of verse 13, "He restrained them not." Was he not even trying? We don't know, but we all just have to try to take care of our own house and we're all doing the best we can.

Hank Smith: 38:41 I actually really like how complicated this is and messy and unclear.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 38:47 Because life is like that.

Hank Smith: 38:49 Yeah, because as a parent, you're going, "Well, how do I restrain?"

John Bytheway: 38:52 I know, yeah.

Hank Smith: 38:53 What am I supposed to do?

John Bytheway: 38:54 Don't do that guys.

Hank Smith: 38:56 That's between you and the Lord. You've got to go to him. Maybe it sounds like Eli, didn't go to the Lord, that he looked the other way, didn't ask the Lord what he was supposed to do. Who knows? That's complicated stuff. That's messy.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 39:10 I think the most important thing that I take again is the role that Hannah plays here in the bringing forth of someone like Samuel who is placed in an environment, which should have been much better than it is, but even so he's able to thrive. I wonder how much of the faith of Hannah has been impacted, even though she only had Samuel for a few years, but how much of that mother's faith has impacted this young man and helped him to be receptive? He certainly needed some help, but to be receptive to the things of God, and then spent his life in the service of his people and of his God.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 40:02 If we rush too quickly to Samuel, I think we missed something really, really powerful. There are plenty of women in the church who just don't see themselves in the scriptures, but they should absolutely see themselves in Hannah and her faith and her determination to contribute. There's something there for anyone who would be a disciple to learn from Hannah and from her experiences as each one of us try to deal with the things that life throws us as well. I love this story and I love the impact

and how we see it played out in the growing faith of this young prophet who brings God back to Israel.

- Hank Smith: 40:46 That's great. That is great. This has been just fantastic. I've got notes through the Book of Ruth and through these first three chapters of Samuel that just changed these chapters for me forever. John, I'm sure you feel the same. Before we let you go, I think our listeners would be interested in your journey of becoming a Bible scholar and also a faithful Latter-day Saint. What's that journey been like for you, and also as a bit of an immigrant too yourself?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 41:15 That's right.
- Hank Smith: 41:15 Right? Born in Australia, and yet here been in the U.S. for what? 30 years now.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 41:22 Yep. It's been a while.
- Hank Smith: 41:23 Tell us that whole journey.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 41:25 Yeah. It's an interesting journey even to me. Sometimes I have to pinch myself and say, "Is this really happening?" I think I've got to go back a ways to answer that. I grew up in a very, very small branch of the church in Australia in a place called Redcliffe and early on, it was a dependent branch. My mother and grandmother had joined the church in 1958, when I mean small, I mean, small. They provided a really important spiritual legacy to me. This was a time when you still had budgets at church. I grew up with my mother and grandmother sewing and cooking all month to have a store so we could raise money so we could pay for renting the scout hall that we met in, those kinds of things. When we built a chapel, my mother and grandmother were out there with picks and shovels, digging the trenches. That's what I have in my mind, but this small branch has some difficulties, but some real pluses. One of them was, I had a friend when I was 11, who was given a missionary triple combination for their birthday.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 42:35 We were really quite close, and so everything he did I wanted to do. So I decided if he's got this missionary triple combination, I wanted one too. I thought it was a righteous desire, so I went up to my mom and said, "Mom, I want a triple combination," and she said, "No." I was a little bit, "Hang on. This is a good thing." She said, "We've got plenty of scriptures out there. You just go get one of them." Well, she didn't understand that I wasn't talking about any one. I wanted missionary with thumb

tabs and the really fine paper and all of those things. I kept asking her and she kept rejecting me, and so eventually I had to change my approach and I went up to her and I remember saying, "Okay, mom, so if I save this money for myself, can I get one?" Then she said, "Yes." Now, in retrospect, looking back, my dad was out of work at that time for an extended period of time, and I'm sure that made things very, very tight for her in a way that I wasn't aware as a kid.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 43:33

But I remember the day I had to save up. I remember it was \$12 that I eventually saved it up. And I remember traveling to Brisbane about an hour away. Mom took us so that I could go and buy this scripture. I brought it home, and because I think it was really good that I had to pay for it myself because I treasured it. I came home and I spent hours unsticking the pages and those kinds of things. Then, one day I was at my sister's and I saw my brother-in-law's missionary scriptures, and I thought, "Oh." I thumbed through them. And I saw that he'd color coded everything. Yellow meant Godhead, red meant restoration, purple meant resurrection, all of these kind of things. I decided if I've got missionary scriptures, I should mark them like missionary scriptures. This started me on a journey that I could never have understood, because I went through that triple combination and I marked everything that my brother-in-law had put there. In the process I'm going, "Oh, that's a cool scripture. Oh." I was 11. I know I'm a little weird. I know that, but that was my beginning.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 44:42

After I finished with my triple combination, I went to mom and said, "I want a Bible. Well, this time she didn't say no, because she saw how invested I was in this. So for Christmas that year I got a Bible, and I went and did exactly the same things. The scriptures opened up to me even as an 11-year-old that I would never even considered. That started me on this journey of just loving to read everything I could get about the church or the scriptures. I even tried to sign up when I was a little bit older for Hebrew classes, but they never carried, so that's one thing that was really important. The second thing, this small branch that has been really helpful to me is because it was so small when you graduated from primary, you got your first calling. That's just the way that it happened. You get your, "Here's your certificate from primary. Oh, by the way, we're calling you to be the junior Sunday school chorister or something like that. That wasn't anything because of me, it was just there was big needs.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 45:46

By the time I was 16, I was the junior Sunday school coordinator, and you know that you learn more when you are teaching than otherwise. When I was 17, I was called to be the

gospel doctrine young adult teacher. Again, it's not because of me, but what I'm saying is all of these things put me in a place where I was learning and studying and things like that. It seemed for years, that's how it went. So I was never called in Young Women's until I came here and I was 45, was my first calling to Young Women's, but I was always teaching, teaching institute. I moved and I went up to, I was in small branches in Townsville, and so I was called as the institute teacher. We only had three young adults there, but that's what we did. I've studied as a physical therapist. One of the things about Australian physical therapists is that they often take off and go backpacking around the world.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 46:45

I went to one hospital in Townsville and everybody seems had just come back from that, and so every lunchtime they're talking about their experiences in India and all of these things. At that time, a friend of mine wrote to me and said, "I'm thinking about backpacking. Do you want to come?" I thought, "Okay." So we took off and we spent six months traveling, but the first place we wanted to go was Israel. I wanted to go to Israel. I wasn't experienced at that point, but we went there. So we had a, "Let's go Europe," in one hand and a Bible in the other hand and let's see what we can find. That changed forever the way I read scripture, because there is a holiness of place, and I felt that. I never had a guide or anything like that, it was just with us with scriptures. Well, I had such a good experience there, and then I came home and I was working in a new hospital, and Elder Faust came to our stake conference.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 47:46

Just before he started his talk, he says, "The Jerusalem Center is about to open up," and he said, specifically, "This is not just for BYU students." He says, "Any of you young women who want to go, you should go." When he said that I had tingles all up and down my spine, and I girded up my loins and I actually went up and talked to him after. I never do that. I never go up and talk to general authorities, but I did to him. He said, "Oh, okay. So you call this person, da, da, da, da." Then, within about three months, I was at Jerusalem from Australia, and this is when The Jerusalem Center was just opening up in 1987. It wasn't the sites because I'd seen the sites. But I had teachers who knew the scriptures. Steven Ricks was one of them and he knew them inside and out, and I just used to sit there being so amazed at his knowledge and how his knowledge of language and culture and context, and I was just, "Oh," I was like sitting under this waterfall, and it was just pouring on me.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 48:53

I'm going, "Oh, I love it. But I can't take all of this in." That was such a life-changing experience that I came home, went on my

mission and then came back and thought, "I want more of this." I came to BYU and got my second degree in Near Eastern Studies, and I was just doing it for fun. I had a career I could go back to, but I finished another bachelor's and they said, "Well, why don't you get a master's?" I thought, "Okay," and did that. When I started doing that, I went into the religion department, Steven Robinson, to see if I could teach some classes, and he did, and the rest is history. They sent me off to Claremont. They didn't let me stay at BYU, which is what I would've liked to have done. I thought, "Oh, how am I going to pay for this? I'm a foreigner. I don't have access to all of the loans. This isn't cheap." I did it with a lot of hope and faith.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 49:49

I got there and I thought I'd jumped into the deep end and couldn't swim, because everybody had been studying this stuff for years. The things that I learned at Claremont were, which was very textually based is the questions that scholars ask of texts. They're different to the questions that we sometimes ask in the church, and I found that with my church background, I answered the questions differently than what my peers at Claremont did because of the restoration. But I found that questions were really, really intriguing to me, one of those places, again, where that just changed the way I thought about, read and studied scriptures. Ever since, I love the scriptures. I love the Old Testament. This is one of my favorite books. I'm a person who thinks that context is really, really important, not just a nice thing, but it's critical for us to be able to even make the connections to how this applies in our life. I do this, some skills that I learned there have been very, very important to my study, the scriptures, and feeling the spirit bless me to see in ways that I haven't seen before. I really believe that the spirit comes to the seekers, not to the passive, so I've got to be looking for questions and reading them so that the spirit can teach me and direct me.

Hank Smith: 51:19

Yeah. I picture a little 11-year-old girl, in a tiny little branch with her triple combination and what that has turned into, has been spectacular.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 51:30

You can see why I pinch myself every now and then, right.?

John Bytheway: 51:33

Brings us full circle about an unexpected life, because that is a beautiful story. I've never heard that about you, and I love that. I want every 11-year-old to hear that story.

Hank Smith: 51:45

That is just awesome. We want to thank Dr. Gaye Strathearn for being with us today. Wow. Wow. Wow. Gaye, you have just

richly blessed John and I and all of our listeners. Thank you for being here.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 51:59

Thanks for having me.

Hank Smith: 51:59

We hope to see you again.

John Bytheway: 52:01

We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen and our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. We hope all of you will come back next week for another episode of followHIM.

HOW CAN I DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE HOLY GHOST AND MY OWN THOUGHTS?



- Hank Smith: 00:05 Hello, my friends. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the amazing John Bytheway. Hello John Bytheway.
- John Bytheway: 00:13 Hi, Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:14 If you've been following followHIM Favorites this year, we're taking a single question from each week's lesson and talking about it.
- Hank Smith: 00:20 This lesson is on the Book of Ruth and the first three chapters of 1 Samuel. We're taking our question from 1 Samuel 3, in which Samuel hears the voice of the Lord, but doesn't know it's the voice of the Lord. He thinks Eli is calling him. And so he goes to Eli, "What did you want?" And Eli says, "It's not me. Go back to bed." This happens a couple of times until Samuel finally realizes, "Oh, wait, that's the voice of the Lord."
- Hank Smith: 00:48 A common question I get is, "How do I tell the difference? How do I know if it's the Spirit, the voice of the Lord, or just my own thoughts?" So, I think this is a good time to bring this up, John. How would you help someone say, "How do I distinguish between the Holy Ghost and my own voice?"
- John Bytheway: 01:06 Such a good question. I remember hearing David O. McKay, somebody saying that the conscience speaks through our own voice, or it sounds like our own voice. Sometimes when the Holy Ghost or our conscience speak to us, it's in our voice. I think one of the really helpful ways is, you know this, Hank, in the Book of Mormon, what is it, Moroni 7, "Does it lead you to do good? Does it lead you to believe in Christ?"
- John Bytheway: 01:28 Sometimes if you're not sure, what is it asking you to do? Is it asking you to do something good that strengthens your faith in Christ? And then you can know with a perfect knowledge it's of God if it's asking you to do something good. That's consistent with what you know about the gospel. So, that helps. I just love,

if teenagers are asking the question, that right there is awesome.

- Hank Smith: 01:49 Just the fact that you're asking the question means you're on the right track and you'll get there. It's something you learn over time. It's very much a line upon line thing. I remember Elder Packer saying he listened as an apostle to the exact same voice he heard when he was a deacon. He said, "But the signal's much clearer now." It's the same voice. You're just learning to kind of tune in. A lot of our listeners have never used a radio where they actually had to tune it in but what you'll find in life is that you're just tuning that radio to get that signal even clearer.
- Hank Smith: 02:24 John, one of my favorite descriptions of the influence of the Holy Ghost is in Doctrine and Covenants 11:12, 13. You can always remember it, 11:12, 13, where the Lord says, "Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good, to do justly," meaning to be honest. "To be humble, and to judge righteously." He says, "This is my Spirit."
- Hank Smith: 02:47 So, if you are feeling like you want to do good, you want to be honest, you need to be humble, and you're not judging people, you're maybe making judgements about situations but you're not judging others, he says, "This is my spirit. You can know for a fact, that's my Spirit." And then he goes on in 13 to say, "I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind," so this idea of promptings, this idea of enlighten your mind, something comes into my head and wow, I'd never thought of that before. That's usually not something I would think to do. And he says, "Which will fill your soul with joy." So I take that to mean that whatever the Holy Ghost is telling me here, it's making me feel good. It's uplifting me. It's making me feel edified inside and encouraged.
- Hank Smith: 03:30 That's part of what we're learning here in 1 Samuel 3, when the Lord says, "Samuel," and he says, "I'm ready. I'm ready." It's learning to distinguish that feeling. Not just a voice, but that feeling of, oh, this is really like you said, John prompting me to do something good.
- John Bytheway: 03:46 I love that 11:12, 13. And it goes with Moroni 7. Too often, we might overthink it and think I have to have this burning feeling or something like that. Well, that happens sometimes to some people. Doesn't happen to everybody. It's so simple to be able to do what you're saying. Is it asking me to do good things? To do right things? Then you can know, Hey, that was a good influence. That was a good impulse I just had. That was a good

prompting, we might say. We will grow in our understanding of how to get those messages.

- John Bytheway: 04:15 I just like what Samuel said, "Speak. Thy servant heareth." That's so good. It's like, I'm ready. What do you want?
- Hank Smith: 04:22 Remember in the Book of Mormon, who is it that calls Mormon as a child. He says, "You're quick to observe."
- John Bytheway: 04:28 Ammaron.
- Hank Smith: 04:29 Ammaron. You're quick to observe this idea of, hey, I can see that when you get a prompting, you go. You act. You're obedient. You're quick to be obedient. If it's a good thing, John, I feel like, Hey, move forward. Move forward. Is that the Lord? Or is that me? Hey, if it's a good thing, move forward. If you're trying to do what's right. You're trying to keep the commandments. You're reading and praying and really trying to make the Lord the number one priority in your life, don't worry too much about, oh, is this me? Or is this the Lord? When you're trying to unite your will with his, those voices can become one and the same at times.
- John Bytheway: 05:07 Well, I do think that's part of the test of life is the Lord saying, "I wonder what they'll do if I don't send a prompting," and that's why we choose the right. We don't have to always be compelled or prompted. We choose the right because we know what's right.
- John Bytheway: 05:20 I wonder sometimes if the Lord tests us that way. What will they do when I don't prompt them? Hopefully we have enough of a testimony to say, "I'm doing the right thing."
- Hank Smith: 05:28 Yeah. I'm going to do good here. What does the Lord say? Yeah. I don't want to have to command you in all things.
- John Bytheway: 05:33 Slothful servant is compelled in all things.
- Hank Smith: 05:36 Yeah. I want you to do many things of your own free will and bring to pass much righteousness,
- John Bytheway: 05:41 King Benjamin. I cannot tell you all the ways that you can sin, but this much I can tell you. Watch yourself and your thoughts and your deeds. Just stay on that covenant path. Sometimes you'll be prompted to, but even if you don't, you know what the covenant path is. You know how to stay on there. That's I think

what President Nelson might remind us, stay on the covenant path.

- Hank Smith: 06:00 As you move forward, doing what John just said, just staying on that covenant path, you'll be able to turn around one day and look back and Eli, the high priest says to Samuel, he says, "It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth with him good." Like, you'll see that you were being directed far more than you thought you were.
- Hank Smith: 06:19 I've noticed that in my life, John. Here I am trying to make good decisions, trying to stay on the covenant path and I look back and I can go, "Oh wow. Look at all these things that fell into place." When maybe I wasn't thinking, "Oh, that's a prompting. That's a prompting. That's a prompting." I'm just trying to do my best and doors and doors and opportunities were opening for me. And you look back and you go, "Oh wow. It was the Lord and he's doing this as seemeth him good." It says Samuel grew and the Lord was with him. I think you can trust that too. The Lord's going to be with you.
- John Bytheway: 06:52 He'll guide you sometimes, even when you don't feel it, if you are striving to be on the covenant path. I love that because that's me too. I look back. Wow. I was being helped back then. I didn't even realize it at the time, but that was a better decision than I thought it was and I think it's because the Lord helped me there and I didn't even realize it.
- Hank Smith: 07:09 I think it was Elder Bednar who said, "You can learn from the times when you feel the spirit, but you can also learn from those times where you don't feel the spirit because the promise of the sacrament is that they will always have his spirit to be with them." So the rare thing should be when I don't feel like I want to do good, when I don't feel like being honest, when I don't feel like judging righteously and I'm having those times and the spirit has withdrawn, I can learn from wow, how that feels.
- John Bytheway: 07:37 I can learn from listening to the great and spacious and giving them heed to remember Elder Bednar saying, "We heeded them not." Right? I know that feels different and I know it does.
- Hank Smith: 07:48 That cold hollowness. You can say to yourself, "Wow. I may not know what the Holy Ghost feels like exactly, but I know what it feels like when it's gone." I'm going to stay away from those situations.

Hank Smith:	07:59	Join us next week for another followHIM Favorites. Come join us for our full podcast. We're talking to Dr. Gaye Strathearn about these chapters and I think you're going to love her. She is just a wonderful, brilliant scholar and she's got a great accent. Come check it out.
John Bytheway:	08:13	Yeah. Got to hear it.
Hank Smith:	08:14	Join us next week for another followHIM Favorites.