



“Let Every Thing That Hath Breath Praise 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:

Does God need our praise? Michael McLean explores how worship and music enrich our lives and how the Psalms enrich our lives and lead to a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Part 2:

Michael McLean returns to share testimony, song, and the value of worship through music.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Michael McLean
- 01:10 Introduction of Michael McLean
- 03:13 Allthingsmichaelmclean.com
- 04:32 Why the psalms didn't have melodies attached
- 06:10 *Unanswered* and the power of the melody and lyric
- 08:48 Praise and gratitude
- 15:40 Have I made a difference?
- 19:46 Psalm 104 and Psalm 105
- 21:54 Feeling forsaken
- 25:32 *Hesed* and the Psalms
- 28:43 Tender mercies of the Lord
- 33:29 *Mr. Kruger's Christmas, Hold On, the Light Will Come* and Ukraine
- 46:36 End of Part I–Michael McLean

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Michael McLean
- 00:07 Psalm 119 symbolism and the Hebrew alphabet
- 03:23 *Hold On, the Light Will Come* and The Ark
- 08:52 Hear Him and the power of songs and music to bring insight and praise
- 12:37 Lehi's Dream and pondering a path
- 15:33 Elder Talmage and the Lamp Vendor
- 18:11 Psalm 111 and building a life to the Lord
- 22:34 Teaching the gospel to children
- 25:00 Michael McLean shares his testimony of Jesus Christ, the power of music, and the importance of sacrifice
- 38:38 Michael McLean shares a personal testimony and song about having a heart attack and receiving inspiration
- 43:14 *Celebrating the Light*
- 44:58 John shares a story about music and a memory care facility
- 45:57 Michael McLean shares the story of his father's passing
- 48:49 *One of the Ninety and Nine*
- 57:17 End of Part II–Michael McLean

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Biographical Information:



For 25 years Michael McClean has been changing lives with tender songs, candid messages, a platinum recording artist with backgrounds in performing, composing, songwriting, producing and directing. Michael McClean has a perfect song for every person, twist or turn along life's path, probably even one for a pelican. Michael McClean released his debut album in 1983, touching lives ever since around the world. Now more than 25 albums later, his musical legacy has not only resonated in the hearts of thousands, but continues to be a standard for those seeking meaning and peace. He's directed some of the church's most beloved films like Together Forever, The Prodigal Son and Mr. Kruger's Christmas. He's written and directed countless musicals, including The Forgotten Carols, Celebrating The Light and another more recent work, Threads. He's written four books.

He and his wife have three children and live in Utah.

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Hank Smith:	00:01	Welcome to followHIM. A weekly podcast, dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:10	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:11	We love to laugh. We want to learn and laugh with you, as together, we follow him.
Hank Smith:	00:18	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith and I am your host. I am here with my co-host John Bytheway, who is like a pelican of the wilderness, like an owl of the desert. John, I am not as a sparrow alone upon the housetop, I am with you. John, that comes from Psalm 102. And I think it means that he is really hungry. So I hope you're really hungry today.
John Bytheway:	00:46	I've never been called a pelican before, Hank. I'm so glad it was you that had that privilege to do that.
Hank Smith:	00:52	I don't know if you've ever seen a pelican of the wilderness, John, but that's a compliment just so you know.
John Bytheway:	00:58	Psalm 102 verse six, in case you want to see that.
Hank Smith:	01:01	Beautiful. We are on our third episode of The Book of Psalms and we have a special guest today. John, can you tell everybody who's with us?
John Bytheway:	01:10	Yes, I can. And I like that you put it, a special guest. This is going to be wonderful. For 25 years Michael McLean has been changing lives with tender songs, candid messages, a platinum recording artist with backgrounds in performing, composing, songwriting, producing and directing. Michael McLean has a perfect song for every person, twist or turn along life's path, probably even one for a pelican. Michael McLean released his

debut album in 1983, been touching lives ever since around the world. Now more than 25 albums later, his musical legacy has not only resonated in the hearts of thousands, but continues to be a standard for those seeking meaning and peace. He's directed some of the church's most beloved films like Together Forever, The Prodigal Son and Mr. Kruger's Christmas. He's written and directed countless musicals, including The Forgotten Carols, Celebrating The Light and another more recent work, Threads. He's written four books.

- John Bytheway: 02:14 He and his wife have three children and live in Utah. And I have a personal story about Michael. He had this three quarter size guitar. I thought, that is the coolest, that's perfect for travel. And I think I said something like that, wow, that's a perfect size, that's great for travel. And I don't remember how many weeks later here's Michael McLean on my porch, handing me a three quarter size guitar.
- Hank Smith: 02:40 Wow.
- John Bytheway: 02:40 And saying, I want you to tell me all of the fun places that you take this thing and all of the fun places that you sing. I became a Michael McLean fan. I thought what a kind thing to do to just show up on my porch. And that guitar, I want to tell you, Michael, Natalie's played it. Andrew's played it. Ashley's played it. I've played it. That guitar is still here in our house, as well beloved. And so you are part of our house and we welcome you today. Thanks for being with us today, Michael.
- Michael McLean: 03:10 Good to be here. Thanks, John.
- Hank Smith: 03:13 Oh, Michael McLean. John, I have my own Michael McLean stories. I'll probably share them during our podcast today. But we've been friends for a decade now and he's as good as you just explain there. He's all good to the core.
- John Bytheway: 03:28 And Michael, I also understand you have a new website. Could you tell us about that?
- Michael McLean: 03:34 My son said, let's build a home for all your songs so that it can be easily accessible and not only songs, but books you've written, we'll do videos of you like we're doing here, but you telling a story about a song. I did a podcast for a while called Songwriter Sunday School, where I'd talk about songs that meant a lot to me and their background and would play them. But it's called allthingsmichaelmclean.com.

Hank Smith: 04:02 Thank you. Our followHIM listeners are good supporters of our guests. So I'm sure you'll see some traffic going to allthingsmichaelmclean.com. We are going to have a great day today. We are in the book of Psalms. And Michael, I thought to myself, Psalms are songs. Who is one of my favorite musicians on planet earth? And we brought him on the podcast today. Michael, how do you want to approach the book of Psalms? What did you think when I asked you to come on?

Michael McLean: 04:32 I've been thinking about the Psalms a lot. You probably, on the other earlier versions, talked about the fact that it's the most quoted in the New Testament. But the thing that I thought first was these songs that became the songs of Jewish kids' youth, why didn't God have the melodies put in the scriptures? Why didn't David's version of Psalm 22 or Psalm 23 with those gorgeous words? I thought, well, I know the notation may have changed. Why didn't Heavenly Father say, here's the tune that goes with that song from David. I had a great aha. The reason those tunes maybe didn't get preserved with those lyrics is because, what if the tune that is connected with a song that could have reached you is that melody you hate? I mean, yuck. Do we have to hear that one more...

Michael McLean: 05:30 My mother's favorite Psalm or hymn in the hymn book growing up when I was growing up was a song called Unanswered Yet, the prayer your lips have pleaded. And I thought the lyric was spectacular, but the melody sounded like it was a bad 1927 recording. It just graded on my nerves. I can understand why it didn't make the cut for the new green hymn book. But those lyrics were so great. And I remember one day I thought, well, in the early hymn books of the church, you just pick a tune.

Hank Smith: 06:01 Yeah.

Michael McLean: 06:01 Oh, let's take this great lyric and this was a popular tune, let's do the Hey Jude tune for this or whatever it was.

Hank Smith: 06:09 Yeah.

Michael McLean: 06:10 The opening line of the song with my tune, unanswered yet the prayer, your lips have pleaded, in agony of heart these many years, does faith begin to fail, is hope declining, and think you all in vain, those falling tears? Say not the father has not heard your prayer. You shall have your desire. You shall have your desire. Sometimes, somewhere you, shall have your desire. Sometimes, somewhere.

- Michael McLean: 07:01 And so whenever I would sing this song, I'd pick my tune. Not because it was the true and living tune, but it spoke to me. And so many times I think we sometimes think with songs that if we're sitting there and the tune doesn't resonate, we miss the power of the lyric. We miss the power of the message. I have a great friend who's a gospel singer, who would come to the back of the chapel with EarPods on, great gospel singer. And she would just sit there before the meeting started. And once I came in and I sat next to her and I said, what you listening to? And it was this Edward Hawkins, unbelievably cool gospel choir. And she said, I'm just feeling the spirit. This is how I hear it, because we don't sing this way.
- Michael McLean: 07:55 And I said, that's right. We don't sing that way. But she said, but this speaks to me. And I love the reality that, of all those songs and all the different interpretations and all the different melodies that could have been written, I don't think Heavenly Father wants us to be unable to hear his messages from those songs because we don't get the chord structure. We don't get the melodies or we don't get... And also because they were not originally written in English they're translations. And so when I take a spirit of a song and try to turn it in a song of my own and interpret it, I don't feel too bad about not just playing a music for the words exactly as written in the King James version, I'm trying to get to the heart of it so that I can keep repeating that message to myself.
- Hank Smith: 08:48 The spirit in which it was written, you get in tune with that. I wanted to read you something from the manual and get both of your thoughts on it. It says, "The Psalms invite us to reflect on the Lord's power, on his mercy and on the great things he has done. We can never repay him for any of this, but we can praise him for it. That praise may take different forms for different people. It may involve singing, praying, or bearing testimony. It often leads to a deeper commitment to the Lord and to following his teachings." It goes on to say, "Whatever praise the Lord means in your life, you can find more inspiration to do it as you read and ponder the Psalms." Michael, I've heard you say before that music is a language. How has the language of music, how have you seen it? I mean, this is your whole career so this is a big question, but how have you seen it bless lives? John, same with you. I want to ask you after I hear from Michael.
- Michael McLean: 09:38 First of all, I'm so glad you read that passage because after I read that passage, trying to get prepared for this... PS, I grew up in a family where my mother taught me from when I was old enough to understand English, there's only one problem with life. What? No, there's only one problem with life. What's that

mom? No background music. What? She said, if we had background music, everything like a movie would go better.

Hank Smith: 10:09

Everything.

Michael McLean: 10:10

Think of this. It would be so much better in your podcast if you read a thing that says, there will be problems if you don't keep the commandments. Or if you say, oh my gosh, you kept the commandments. If there was just music, everything would be clear. As you're driving up to this place, having the person in your head tell you the directions. I want heavenly AirPods. I want to say, watch out, go left. Now, there's traffic problems here. No, no, no, no, no. Don't spend any more time here, this isn't good for you.

Hank Smith: 10:45

Right.

Michael McLean: 10:45

So when I read that section about praise, I have to be honest, this is two days old. I thought, does God need us to sing praise... Is he not quite sure he's okay? And if we just sing more praises to him, then he'd be good.

Hank Smith: 11:03

Then he'll feel okay inside.

Michael McLean: 11:06

This may be a little irreverent, but I wrote this down because I needed to learn something. And of course, sometimes the song teaches me the truth the only way my heart can hear it. And I picked an actually reverent in the hymn book tune. And this is my thing about praise. I don't think that God, that God is insecure and needs us to praise him so he'll feel okay. He's never been unsteady. I don't think he's ever been unsure. We're waiting for my praise to make his day. But if we call his name every moment that we see, another miracle given you or me, it truly won't be hard to praise him ever more for those gifts I never truly thanked him for.

Michael McLean: 12:13

And then what I realized is, God doesn't say, praise me, praise me, praise me, because he needs to hear the praise. It's because in recognizing the gifts, it changes us. It changes the way we see things. It changes our gratitude function. And of course, spending time in Nashville and working with some of the greatest Christian songwriters, they've got the praise songs down and we don't sing... The closest to a praise song I may have ever written is in the Forgotten Carol's called Rise and Shine Forth. And that really feels like a praise song. I've started to think about every song in which Michael McLean goes, oh, I missed that the first time. That's the way father in heaven

changes me. He doesn't need the validation. He needs me in the thanking to go, oh, oh my heavens, there's another gift you gave me I missed. Thank you.

Hank Smith: 13:09

That's beautiful.

John Bytheway: 13:11

I grew up in a family that the ancient phonograph was constantly going. My dad was not a musician, but he had great musical taste. Every Sunday morning dad was walking around in the living room, leading the phonograph. And my mom sang in the Tabernacle Choir. And so did my grandparents, my great grandparents. So I told you, Hank, when I went on my mission and elders played the Tabernacle Choir, they were just discovering it and it was making me homesick because it's what I grew up with. And so it's always been important to me. And I was thinking as we were approaching this, that one of the hymns that I feel is a Psalm is How Great Thou Art. And as Michael was saying, it's not, I think God needs me to say this to him today. Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hands have made. I see the stars. I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed then sings my soul. And it's for me too. It's not just for him. It's for me. How great thou art.

John Bytheway: 14:21

And, Hank, as a teenager being on scout trips and growing up in Salt Lake City and just enough street lights that I didn't see the stars. But I remember going on scout trips and looking up at that display and just going, whoa, what is going on out there? Look at all those stars. And having that, how great thou art feeling and being able to say to myself, my father did that, that is my heavenly father that did that, was a powerful, affirming moment to think, that's my father that did all this? And I wanted to sing that song. It reminds me too, of James Taylor that I listened to my sisters mostly when they were teenagers who sang a song called On The Roof. And he had this one line, on the roof the stars put on a show for free. And those stars blew me away. And I thought of that. Doesn't that sound like a Psalm, Michael, How Great Thou Art?

Michael McLean: 15:24

How Great Thou Art is the best. It's the best of all those. And like you said, the power of it is not, wow you made a great world. It's, you made a great world for me.

John Bytheway: 15:37

Well, yeah, what it does for me is-

Michael McLean: 15:40

We just listened to the thing about Elijah and how unbelievable, spectacular things where Elijah calls down the heavens and everything's going great. And then he is gone and he thinks,

well, maybe I failed. I mean, here I am sitting, didn't work out so great. And I started to think about all the things that I thought, I did this in hopes that I could have an impact on the world, that I would change them. And this is what came. And I also dedicate this to you, my dear friends, who are in fact making a difference. My song went like this.

Michael McLean: 16:16 Have I made a difference at all? Have I made a difference at all? Maybe. Sometimes, probably not that much. If a difference has been made, it's not for me to judge, but do I make a difference at all? Do I make a difference at all? I just keep on trying. I won't stop myself, even if I'm not sure if all the trying helps, but I'll try and try and try and try. And maybe one day I'll see that the difference I have tried to make made all the difference in me.

Michael McLean: 17:28 As I get closer to the other side. And as we talked about a little bit earlier, I'm on a kidney donor list. And if I don't get a kidney, I don't get to try to make a difference at all. And fortunately, there's been a huge blessing that a kidney donor has come along, who heard me sing my Psalms in 1995 in Colorado Springs, but the song stuck with him. And when he found out that I needed a kidney, he decided to volunteer, which is beyond humbling. And of course, John, as a kidney donor knows about this, but the thing that I thought is, so what if I don't get a kidney? What if I'm done? Did I make a difference at all? And I got this song because that's my language. And it's, Michael, you're measuring the wrong things. You're measuring and in show business and as a songwriter, how many streams did you get? How many people loved it? That's what really counts.

Hank Smith: 18:25 Yeah.

Michael McLean: 18:25 And I thought, no, no, no, no, no. And I have to add this. I have a granddaughter and I was driving with her in the car and we were listening to hits the 10 year old's love. And Ariana Grande was singing a song she loved. And when the song was over, it was just Sadie and I, and that the DJ said, that's Ariana Grande singing 7 Rings or golden rings or something. It's just passed 300 million streams. 300 million. I turned to my granddaughter. I said, Sadie, what's your grandpa got to do to get 300 million people to hear one of my songs. And without thinking, she says, stop writing yesterday's favorites and start working on today's hits. Start working on today's hits instead of yesterday's favorites. So I think all of us, whether it's a podcast or a film or anything, that are trying with all our souls to make a difference, and we don't really know the gift is we get to make a difference. And that's what changes us. That's what transforms us. That's what makes us new creatures, I think.

- Hank Smith: 19:46 Psalm 105 is interesting in that it sings about songs. It starts this way. 105:1. So it sounds like a great radio station, doesn't it? "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord. Call upon his name. Make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him. Sing Psalms unto him. Talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye and his holy name. Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his face ever more." So we have a song telling us to sing. Even in the previous Psalm, Psalm 104, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." That sounds like you, Michael, I will sing until my very last breath, which we hope is not anytime soon.
- John Bytheway: 20:37 I'm reminded of this song. I don't know if it comes from a song. You have to forgive me if it does, but how can I keep from singing? That's my only way to share what I'm feeling right now. And that just reminds me again of How Great Thou Art, is where do I go with all of this awe that I feel? How can I keep from singing? So I love that music is such a part of the gospel that Jesus would sing a hymn, that they did this in all of their practice before Passover, things like that, that it was such a part of it. And, Hank, I even want to look at Psalms 100 that's just before the lesson plan, it's very short, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands, serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing." He wants that, I think. And there's something magical and otherworldly about music that's international. How music has always been a part of the gospel here, way back in the Old Testament, that we have 150 songs or Psalms here at least.
- Hank Smith: 21:43 Surprised to learn they sang during the temple sessions. So here they are doing the sacrifices and lighting the altar of incense and they've got a choir there. They've got a choir singing.
- Michael McLean: 21:54 One of my great ahas about Psalms, and this is not a doctrine. This was just an aha. This is a big deal to me and very sacred and I hope it's okay to share this. I was reading the 122nd Psalm earlier this month and it's the, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And that was always a very, very precious lyric to me, but I hadn't thought of it in the context of a song because it was the lament of Jesus on the cross. And during my nine year faith crisis, one of the great things that gave me hope was my dad had given this really great talk. And he said, you think you're having a hard time. If the son of the almighty is saying, why have you forsaken me? I'm feeling abandoned. I'm struggling. It's not because God's in another side of the universe.

- Michael McLean: 22:47 It's because he, the greatest intelligence of them all, was bearing witness that if he could put all of his faith in Jesus, that he would come through and do the father's will even when his father's spirit wasn't there, can't we all? And I was going through such a hard time. And I remember him saying to me, and maybe when you feel most abandoned, and for me, it was a nine year drought of thinking, why won't he talk to me? If Jesus could go through that, and if Heavenly Father could say, I have faith in Jesus, maybe your drought is your father in heaven is saying, Michael, I have faith in you, that you will choose me even when you don't feel like I'm there. So I have great love for that scripture, but here's the aha for me, I realized as I went through this unbelievable Psalm, that completely, a thousand years before Jesus came, is describing the crucifixion.
- Michael McLean: 23:47 It's no it's going to be like this. And then it's going to be like this. And then it's going to be like this. And only at the very end, is there the hope of it. And then I thought, this makes me weep. What if at the moment on the cross where Jesus is in agony and his mother is at the bottom of the cross, he chooses, because he doesn't have any energy, a few lyrics from a song she taught him growing up. She taught him because the song would prepare him, that maybe that's when he said, is that me? And then in his final moment, if he says to his mother, and maybe he sang it, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?" She knew all the rest. She filled in all the blanks. She got every message. And so in his final moments on the cross, rather than proclaiming his agony, he used a song to comfort his mother.
- Michael McLean: 25:04 I thought of my gratitude for the fact that's my language. Writing the songs, thinking about the songs, making up songs, that's how God talks to me. That's how I figure stuff out in my strange brain. And it may not be true or doctrinal or perfect, but it's perfect for me. And so thinking of all these other songs that come up, I'm seeing them in a whole new light.
- Hank Smith: 25:31 Absolutely wonderful. I wanted to share something with both of you that maybe you did not know before, John, you'll have to tell me if you already knew this, but there is a word that appears 245 times in the Hebrew Bible, but is not found in the King James text. And, John, I think a couple of our guests have mentioned this. It's called, chesed. I read this article from Dr. Daniel Belknap, who was on our podcast previously, the article is called How Excellent Is Thou Loving Kindness. The gospel principle of chesed, he says this word appears 245 times in the Hebrew Bible, but it's really difficult to translate. He said the KJV provides no less than 15 different terms for this word, chesed. The most common he says is mercy, kindness or loving

kindness. This term appears in Psalms at Psalm 25, Psalm 31, 36, 44, 51 59, 86, 106, 107, 109. And the list goes on.

- Hank Smith: 26:40 Well, what is this chesed? Let me read from the article, "If salvation is becoming like God, then the doctrine of chesed, as presented in the Old Testament, reveals his divine nature and it illuminates ours." He said, "Moses declared that God desires to do chesed when he stated that delivering man is not just God's work, but also his glory. God loves what he does." I love that statement, John, God loves what he does. "And thus the full meaning of chesed is revealed. For while it is an act predominantly done by God, his expectation is that those who experience his chesed should do so as well. This in turn suggests that chesed said is ultimately revealed to teach us how to act like God we perform chesed when we find ourselves doing the same things God does, we engage in the work of deliverance. If those works are big or small, each one instructs us in our obligations to our fellow men and to God." He says, "We may begin these obligations in covenantal relationships, but these relationships allow us to learn how to delight in performing chesed."
- Hank Smith: 27:57 I wanted to share with you just a couple of these verses, John and Michael. This is 107 verse 43, "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness, the chesed of the Lord." It happens again in 109 verse 26. "Help me, oh Lord my God. Oh, save me according to thy chesed."
- John Bytheway: 28:21 Well, I wonder because one of them that I underlined was 119 verse 77. "Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live for thy law is my delight." And I think it was Elder Bednar that brought that Tender Mercies phrase into our consciousness and conversation so often.
- Michael McLean: 28:43 Elder Bednar gave that talk in 2004, his first talk about Tender Mercies. I was in California at the time and I thought, man, that's a great talk. And I thought to myself, it's too bad that wasn't a song because that message is so profound to me. That's when I fell in love with him and I thought that is so great. Two o'clock in the morning I woke up and this is what came. This is based on his talk, and then what happened to me afterwards.
- Michael McLean: 29:14 The day that the soldier crossed through the veil, I heard his late wife got his letter in the mail and it said how he loved her though so very far away. And he knew they'd be together forever, someday. And she was heard to say a tender mercy has

come to me. It came from heaven I do believe. It seems like whenever I choose to see God's tender mercies pour down on me. Well, I believe forever that a song is a gift. It can speak to your spirit with the power to lift. Though the tune may be simple, it can run so deep, teaching lessons like this one that woke me from my sleep. It's what I'm going to keep. It was a tender mercy that came to me. It came from heaven I still believe. Seems like whenever I choose to see God's tender mercies pour down on me. And if you're out there and listening, and you're wondering why you get this feeling inside you, makes you want to cry. Perhaps you're reminded of a memory or two, when God's tender mercies were given to you.

- Michael McLean: 31:30 But then maybe you're thinking, Mike, this hurts too much. With unanswered prayers, you feel so out of touch. Well, I wish I could be there and help you hold on till that day, when your heart can't help singing this song. I know you'll sing as strong a tender mercy was come to me. It came from heaven I do believe. Maybe why I was chosen is because I chose to see God's tender mercies are for those who believe. His tender mercies are for you and for me.
- John Bytheway: 32:47 Thank you. All of us, I think since that talk have had that feeling in your song. And I think this week my family has, oh, that was a tender mercy. How often have you done that? And I think it was Elder Gerald N. Lund who wrote a book called Divine Signatures.
- Hank Smith: 33:06 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 33:06 That same idea. And, Hank, you had a talk, he knows you. He knows you about personal little tender mercies that people get.
- Hank Smith: 33:14 I just kept a tender mercy journal and I thought I've got so many of these I need to share them. So yeah, I turned them into a talk because they're just these beautiful stories of God's personal timely messages that come to each one of us.
- John Bytheway: 33:29 In my Christmas book I wrote about this. I was so thrilled that my last mission companion was one of my high school friends. And so Elder Andrew and I were at Christmas conference in Baguio city in the Philippines. And we watched, guess, Michael. We watched Mr. Kruger's Christmas.
- Michael McLean: 33:50 Wow.
- John Bytheway: 33:50 And I'm in the Philippines watching snow fall on Temple Square. And Elder Andrew and I both from Salt Lake City we're going,

whoa that's because we love Christmas, love Temple Square, love seeing snow fall in Temple Square as that movie goes on and the dancers are there and I'm going, whoa, that's a heart tug for home. Well, I went back to my area and I have never seen this before since, but I'm back to the hot muggy Philippines and I'm walking down this street and there is a tree that is swarming with fireflies. And I've never seen it before or since, but that tree was glistening like Temple Square. And I remember just thinking, did the Lord do that for me? That was my thought, whoa, look at this. People were standing around and looking at it because I don't think they'd ever seen anything like it before. But I thought, did the Lord just send me a Christmas card?

- John Bytheway: 34:59 Yeah, I'll never forget that. That was my tender mercy that actually was funny because it was a day or two after watching snow on Temple Square and Mr. Kruger's Christmas.
- Hank Smith: 35:09 That's beautiful.
- Michael McLean: 35:11 I hired Jimmy Stewart to do Mr. Kruger's Christmas.
- Hank Smith: 35:14 I remember that story.
- Michael McLean: 35:15 That was my story. One of my great memories is I got a chance to... And intimidating. I was 27 years old and I'm standing in front of the first presidency of the quorum of the 12 by myself and I'm playing all the parts. I'd spent three years trying to sell this idea and I felt strongly about it. I felt guided by it. But I was a kid. I didn't know what I was doing. But I knew I was supposed to get this story told because I'd been producing the Tabernacle Choir music and The Spoken Word for years. And I thought instead of just a concert, maybe we could let the choir's music that I grew up with in Chicago and New Jersey where all my Jewish friends would come over during the holidays and listen to the Tab Choir. And it was really something.
- Michael McLean: 35:56 And so, here I am alone and I had cards and I pushed play on the cassette player for the songs that were in that. And this is what it's going to be. And I didn't know who we'd be able to hire to play the part of Mr. Kruger's Christmas, but in my heart, I wanted it to be Jimmy Stewart. So I did bad Jimmy Stewart, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. And I stumble and blah blah, do this thing. And I remember that moment where after it got presented to the brethren and the gift of being young is you don't know you can't do it. You don't know that as a 27 year old who plays in rock bands that you could go out and hire the

biggest star in the world to make a movie that's going to be seen by 300 million people in all those different languages.

Michael McLean: 36:47 Oh my gosh. And in fact, years ago I was in Ukraine because the president of Ukraine had invited me, the former president, Viktor Yushchenko who led the Orange Revolution. He had invited me to come and sing at his birthday party. I had a translator who helped there. And then I did some firesides on the Temple Square there in Ukraine. And I met a woman who came up, she said, I didn't join the church till a few years ago but when I was 12 years old, the first Christian thing ever broadcast on communist, former Soviet television was Mr. Kruger's Christmas. And I sat there and I wept. And I didn't know where it came from. I didn't know what it was about, but I thought, oh, this is what Christmas is in an American country that's free and that has religious freedoms. And I felt it. Fast forward years later, the missionaries in Ukraine knock on her door. And as they're talking about the spirit and how she feels it, she says, well, the closest I've had to this feeling was when I was 11.

Michael McLean: 37:58 This makes me cry. When I was 11 years old and I felt something called Mr. Kruger's Christmas and the Tabernacle Choir. And the missionary said, well, that's us. That's us. And then this Ukrainian woman that had joined the church, throws her arms around me. And she said, whatever sacrifices you made to figure out how to get that movie made... And then she just held me and wouldn't let go. There are people who've been faithfully listening to you. And one episode may reach them more than others. And another one maybe not. Hopefully one of these songs on this episode may be touching them. But while you're going through, there will be a moment. Maybe it's now where something beyond Hank and John and Michael reaches out and makes a word or a thought or a phrase or a lyric or an insight and suddenly, boom, where has that been? How come I didn't get that? And we don't know when those moments are and we don't measure them and they're not about us anyway.

Michael McLean: 39:13 The older I get, the more convinced I am, whether it's stopping a fireside in Colorado Springs and said somebody else needs to speak. And all these years later, that one who said it was me, let me give you my kidney. We don't know. There are so many orchestrations, so many beautiful moments that have been... People that have been brought into our lives. Just last month my song Hold on, the Light Will Come, which was my song about hanging in there that I wrote for my musical about the arc. And it had always been one of my favorite songs and it really helped me then. Just a month ago, I wake up in the middle of the night

and this spirit says, Hold on, the Light Will Come, translated into Ukrainian. And with kidney failures, as bad as mine is, I have no energy. I can't do anything. And I thought, well, that's interesting. What am I... No, no, no. Michael, figure out how to get in touch with those people who translated your songs, when you went there years ago.

Michael McLean: 40:21 You got to translate Hold on, the Light Will Come. Oh, and while you're doing that, spirit, find somebody who's a great Ukrainian singer that everybody would know and have that person sing it. You can go back to bed now.

Hank Smith: 40:34 Okay? Yeah, sure.

Michael McLean: 40:35 I send a little text out about my song, Hold on, the Light Will Come. And then that next day, Dave Levitt, who had facilitated my getting there and getting to know Viktor Yushchenko. He said, this is interesting. I'm going to Ukraine to help distribute cash funds through my foundation to help people who are refugees. You said you needed a singer maybe this is the one. And sends me a link to the woman who was just last fall the runner up to the Ukrainian version of The Voice. Amazing singer. And he says, oh, by the way, her brother-in-law lives in South Jordan.

Michael McLean: 41:16 And I said, this isn't even real. So in the middle of the night, I'm on the phone. Oh, she's not in Ukraine right now. She's a refugee in Poland. Let me see if I can get her on the phone, through her brother-in-law the translator. So I'm on this four way call and she doesn't know who I am. She doesn't know who this song is, although I find out that she's a return missionary that had served her mission in Ukraine. And I said, I'm going to send you a copy of a version of this song maybe it'll let you know if it's something that you'd be willing to sing, because she's an amazing singer. We've got a translator that's working on it, but could you maybe help us translate it? And oh, while I got you on the phone, could you find a recording studio in Warsaw and tell me what key you want to hear my song in? And I'll sit here in Heber and I'll play the background, nothing fancy, no orchestration, to Hold On, the Light Will Come and I'll send it over the internet to Warsaw so you can sing it.

Michael McLean: 42:25 And she says, okay. We find out what key it is. I'm always intimidated about not being a very good piano player, but there was nobody else. I send it to Warsaw. She sends me back the recording and I'm weeping. My song, Hold On, the Light Will Come written 40 years ago to help me with my depression and be part of a musical and she sings this spectacular... It was so

moving that the former first lady of Ukraine heard her sing it as they were playing it... This kills me, playing it on a YouTube speaker for a bunch of refugees in a tent and they're weeping. And these tough, tough, broken Ukrainians are holding each other with, hold on, the light will come. And Kateryna Yushchenko says, I think I know the guy who still owns the biggest broadcast station in Ukraine. Let's get it there.

Michael McLean: 43:28 And then they put it on YouTube. And then I get an email yesterday from a buddy of mine from Heber who's doing a refugee mission in Romania, working with refugees, none of which are members, but trying to help them get placed. And they say, every time we hold them and try to feed them, we take our YouTube speaker and we play your song in their language. And here's the sweetest thing of all. I wasn't there for the recording. When it comes to the end of that song and it reprises the opening verse, Yulia whispers the words. She's got the most spectacular voice ever, but she whispers the words. And when I finally got back to thank her for this amazing thing, she, through the translator said, said, it's not the high notes, it's not the power of a great vocal performance. She says, it's the still, small voice.

Michael McLean: 44:46 And I felt at the moment, don't sing it, whisper it because my people need to feel the still, small voice. And the fact that a song was how that was used and may bless people that 40 years ago, I could have never known could be blessed. It's, talk about God being great all the time. And there are miracles. We don't see them we don't know they're coming, but they are real.

John Bytheway: 45:36 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 John, you mentioned tender mercies from Psalm 119 verse 77. Those who are studying with us might be questioning what is up with Psalm 119. Can you explain what all these symbols and headers are about?
- John Bytheway: 00:26 Yes, I can. If you look at Psalm 119 it's 176 verses, but it's divided. And if you look at it, you will see it's divided using Hebrew symbols. So look at Psalm 119 on page 792 if you're using ancient paper scriptures, like I am, and you'll see the symbol and the word, I hope I'm saying it right, aleph, and notice it starts with an A, and the next symbol just above verse nine is beth.
- Hank Smith: 00:59 There it is, yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:59 This is the Hebrew alphabet. So here's what's fun to know about this. We will talk about this again when we talk about Proverbs, but this is called an acrostic poem. And some of you going, "Oh, cross-stitch, I've done cross..." No, acrostic is like saying Hank, "A is for your altruisticness. B is for your benevolence. C is for your charity. D is for your delightfulness." And each of these are divided among the consonants, I think it was. Let me see. I have a study Bible that explains it here. Let's see what it says. This very lengthy poem is an acrostic. For each of the 22 consonants of the Hebrew alphabet, there are eight verses beginning with that letter. Within the Psalm, eight words for God's law occur again and again, law, testimonies, promise, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgements, and word. These words elaborate the application of the law of God to daily life and to Israel's destiny.
- John Bytheway: 02:04 So that's why those little letters are there. But I just want to say, some things become so important to us just explaining it isn't enough. We want to put it into a poem or into a lyric, and this is exactly what Michael has been telling us about. In fact, Hank, you and I remember last year, as we were talking about section

76 of the Doctrine and Covenants, that revelation at the John Johnson farm, the vision of the three degrees of glory, has a poetic version. It meant so much to them, they wrote it again as a poem. Before, when we were setting up microphones and everything. Michael, you mentioned a poem of Bruce R. McConkie. What was that you mentioned?

- Michael McLean: 02:50 I Believe in Christ has been quoted way more than anything he ever said in conference. It's the song, it's the songs that live with us.
- John Bytheway: 02:57 That was the impression I got. Some things are so important we're going to work even harder and put it in a poetry form or a lyrical form.
- Hank Smith: 03:05 Put it into a song.
- John Bytheway: 03:07 And so that kind of means a lot to me that here in this song, this meant a lot to them. So they designed it to fit with each letter and not just A to Z or whatever the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet is, but A through Z, it's everything, alpha through omega.
- Hank Smith: 03:23 That's awesome, John. There is a verse in here I'd like to highlight and see what both of you think about it. It's a pretty famous verse. One that's well known. Psalm 119:105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have a parable I want to share from James Talmage. But first I want to hear from both of you about thy word is a lamp unto my feet.
- Michael McLean: 03:48 Light is just a part of all the songs. And I so resonate with 105, and the story I just told you about hold on, the light will come and a number of other things.
- Hank Smith: 04:00 I don't know if everybody's heard the light will come. Can you give us that?
- Michael McLean: 04:03 This is the English version. This is what Noah, in my musical about the ark, and since we've been doing Old Testament, this is what Noah... Everybody gets through the crisis and thinks, oh, yay, yay, yay. The storm's over. Ah, got through that, we're done. And Noah, who's a little wiser, said, "No, it's going to get hard again, but we can't forget this moment." And he sings. The message of this moment is so clear. And as certain as the rising of the sun. If your world is filled with darkness, doubt or fear, just hold on, hold on, the light will come because everyone who's ever tried and failed, we stand much taller when the

victory is won. And those who've been in darkness for a while, we kneel much longer when the light has come.

- Michael McLean: 05:24 It's a lesson every one of us must learn, that the answers never come without a fight. And when it seems you've struggled far too long, just hold on, there will be light. Hold on. Hold on. The light will come. Hold on. If you feel trapped inside a never ending night, you just hold on. If you've forgotten how it feels to feel the light then hold on, if you are half crazy thinking maybe you're the only one who's afraid that light may never ever come. Just hold on. Hold on. The light will come. Hold on. Hold on. The light will come because you're not alone.
- Michael McLean: 06:50 Even though right now you're on your own, you are loved in ways that can't be shown, your needs are known, but you're not alone. When you cry, you're just letting go of heartache deep inside. So tomorrow there'll be sunshine and sky and love close by, but you're not alone. And I know that it's not easy, and I know that it won't last because one who loves you more than me, he's sending his blessings fast. You're not alone. Say it one more time. I'm not alone. And even when it's hard, sometimes it's hard to find the words, your prayers are always heard. You're not alone. The lesson of this moment is clear. And as certain as the rising of the sun. If your world is filled with darkness, doubt or fear, just hold on, hold on, the light will come. The light will come.
- Hank Smith: 08:47 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
- Michael McLean: 08:52 I'm feeling that light. I am grateful to have been blessed after spending so many years in aching and yearning. I'm feeling the light, and it's embarrassing to me to confess that, it's a little presumptuous I think, that here are the great words in the holy scriptures and I'm writing songs about them as if, well, maybe this is worthy. Maybe this take on light or this feeling about tender mercies or coming up on 127, I read that thing about an excerpt that God builds the house and I thought, oh, here's the song. I know it's a little pretentious, and it's a little self-serving, "Oh, look at me. I wrote a song about the scriptures. These are my songs. David was fine, but he's been dead a long time." But it's the way I'm allowed to witness of those truths.
- Michael McLean: 09:53 I'm not a seminary teacher. I'm not an Institute. I don't have a PhD. I listen to your podcast and try to figure stuff out because I'm just not that bright in so many ways. I hope that the songs throw the focus to where it's supposed to be, which is not about the song, not about the scripture, not about the quote, not about the talk. It's about the source of all the things we're trying

to witness. It's got to come through and be focused on that. And if I've been lucky enough to have any of my songs or any of the things that I've written that have music with it, point not to me as much as people in show business want to have their egos fluffed up. Every songwriter wants to be Billy Joel or Paul McCartney. We want that. But if somehow I can... Before I'm gone, I want to get past that.

- Michael McLean: 10:51 The reason I did my little allthingsmichaelmclean.com website that I spent two years with my son is I wanted every thought, every song, every musical, every book, and I have 22 new songs that nobody's ever heard that I wrote during the pandemic, that if I get to live a little longer, I'd like to get those through. But my great hope is that people won't say, "Gosh, that Michael McLean, 50 years, he's still writing pretty good songs." No, my hope is they'll say, "I hadn't thought that before. Wow. What a cool idea. My heart is now going to kind of sing that." And I'm sure that's what you are about. I'm sure that's what your podcast is about. And I'm so grateful that President Nelson said, "Hear him."
- Michael McLean: 11:43 You know how profound that is to a songwriter, hear him. Hear him in the language and in the hope and in the melodies, you find a way to hear him. And the harder I try to listen, the more I realize he has a melody for every soul. He has a brilliant insight for every academician. He has a perfect quote from a scripture to those who studied the scriptures and he is in all of it. All of it. And my praise, my new song of praise is, wow, another place you are that I didn't know. That's my heart.
- Hank Smith: 12:30 It's beautiful. John, what did you want to add to thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
- John Bytheway: 12:37 So many thoughts about that. One of them, oddly, Lehi's dream. We all know, oh yeah, that's the rod of iron, the tree of life. But how does it start? I was in a dark and dreary wilderness and I wandered for many hours, and Michael's talked about something we might compare to that. I was in a dark and dreary wilderness for many hours. And then he prayed according to the multitude of his tender mercies, I think he says, look at the order. I prayed. I beheld. The only thing I can imagine is, as soon as he prayed, the Lord turned the lights on because suddenly he can see. And you look at that verse, thy word is a lamp unto my feet. Suddenly the light came and I could see where I was going.
- John Bytheway: 13:25 The gospel lights the path, and then we know here's who I am, who's why I'm here. Stephen Covey wrote that Albert Einstein was asked once, "If you could ask God anything, what would

you ask him?" And Albert Einstein said, "Well, I'd ask him how he created the universe." And then he changed his mind and said, "No, no, no, no, wait. I would ask him why he created the universe because then I would know the meaning of my life." There's the lamp unto your feet. This is the path. This is who you are. This is where you're going. And this is why you're here. This is the covenant path President Nelson might say.

John Bytheway: 14:01

I remember another favorite verse of mine coming up in Proverbs, ponder the path of thy feet. It's like, where are you going? What's your path? And so feet are always kind of, scripturally I think, indicating a direction, a path that you're on. So thy word is a lamp to my feet, that sounds like the word of the Lord, the scriptures. They hear him, as Michael was talking, thy word is a lamp to my feet. The one last thing that I just love about this is some of the greatest teachings ever have come from gotcha questions. From people with not the best motives.

John Bytheway: 14:37

So here's Abinadi and they're trying to stump him with an Isaiah verse. "Hey, what does this mean? How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that publisheth good tidings of good? And Abinadi, are you priests who pretend to teach these people?" And he's using the 10 commandments and everything, but he eventually answers the question and talks about the prophets and how beautiful upon the feet of their mountains. And then the thing I love about Abinadi is he looks to the future and those who are still proclaiming the gospel, how beautiful are their feet, and how beautiful are the feet of those who will hereafter publish peace. And I think of all these missionaries that are out and all of us who are trying to publish good tidings of good. And it started with a question about feet. Okay, now I know who I am and where I'm supposed to go and the way is lit before me. So that's huge.

Hank Smith: 15:33

Yeah. To me, that's an impressive, what you and Michael both say, is that the light is part of the gospel. It's frequently used as a representation of the Savior. John called him the Light, capital L. I wanted to share this parable that Elder Talmage shared. It's a simple parable. He calls it The Parable of the Two Lamps. He relates an experience he had with a lamp vendor. Apparently this lamp salesman wanted to sell Elder Talmage a brighter lamp, but Elder Talmage was confident he already had the best lamp available.

Hank Smith: 16:07

So he was shocked to see just how superior the vendor's lamp was. All he had to do was turn on his lamp. Its light made bright, the remotest corner of my room. In its brilliant blaze, my own little lamp burned a weak pale yellow until that moment of

convincing demonstration, I had never known the dim obscurity in which I had lived and labored, studied and struggled.

- Hank Smith: 16:36 And he said that, of course he purchases the lamp. This comes from a BYU-Idaho Devotional by Steven Hunsaker. He adds this, "How foolish we would be to smugly conclude that there are neither questions yet to be asked nor light yet to be received?" How foolish we would be. In other words, to decline the offer of a brighter lamp, the offer of greater light. I love this idea, John and Michael, thy word is a lamp unto my feet, please make it brighter. Please give me more. And what does the Doctrine and Covenants say, he who continueth within God, John, you could finish this for me.
- John Bytheway: 17:13 Section 50, verse 24, and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day. One of my favorite verses. I just came from a little speaking assignment, some wonderful leaders in a girl's camp. And I just was trying to express to them, can you imagine if every teenager on the planet could stand up once, twice a week and say, as the young men do, "I'm a beloved son of God and he has a work for me to do." Or as the young women do, "I'm a beloved daughter of heavenly parents with an eternal nature and divine destiny." And to be able to actually know who they are and what path they're on. Can you imagine what a different world we would have if everybody could stand and say, "This is who I am, this is what I believe. This is what I will do. This is what I will not do." What a light thy word is unto my feet. It just illuminates everything like you said.
- Hank Smith: 18:07 What did Jesus say? He that followed me shall not walk in darkness.
- John Bytheway: 18:11 Walk in darkness.
- Hank Smith: 18:11 But shall have the light of life. Michael, you mentioned earlier, Psalm 127. What's it about? And why did it stand out to you?
- Michael McLean: 18:19 Well, I came across the line accept the Lord, build the house. I thought of a song that I didn't realize was my effort to not only reflect the whole idea of having the Lord help me build my house, but the lyrics seem to matter. And a lot of the songs are about praise and a lot of the songs are lamentations. And a lot of the songs of David are just please forgive me, I kind of missed the point. They're all different kinds of songs. I love it because they're songs that are kind of commitments to Jesus. Well, here's mine for 127.

Michael McLean:	19:05	I took a snapshot of my life, but the exposure was all wrong. I couldn't see a thing developing, it's been that way too long. So I have come with a request, though part of me thinks I'm insane, but I'm determined to see this thing through and I will not complain. Here is the best part. Take my life and turn it into something better. Choose any way you will. Take this shack, break down the walls and build a palace up on a higher hill. I thought I knew where I should go. I tried to get there all alone. I took the easy roads and now I know that I'm lost, and I'm all alone and on my own. So take my life and turn it into something useful.
Michael McLean:	20:30	Don't stop until you are done. Take these eyes, make them see a clearer vision of what I can become. On those days when I think I'm dying, I'll trust in you and I'll keep on trying. If you picked this road, I'll take it. And with you by my guide, I know I can make it. Please take my life and make it one that is worth living. Don't stop until you're through. Take this life, the one that I am freely giving, I give it all. I give it all, I give it all to you. I give it all to you.
John Bytheway:	22:06	Like it, accept the Lord, build the house. It's like you're saying, help me build this because you're a better builder than I am.
Hank Smith:	22:14	"Men and women who turn their lives over to God," said President Benson, "will find out he can make a lot more."
John Bytheway:	22:19	He can make a lot more.
Hank Smith:	22:20	"Out of their lives than they can."
John Bytheway:	22:21	Out of their lives, yeah.
Hank Smith:	22:25	Accept the Lord, build the house. They labor in vain that build it. This is 127, accept the Lord, keep the city, the Watchman waketh but in vain.
John Bytheway:	22:34	I like those, verse four and five are kind of fun. It's like children are like arrows, verse five, happy is the man that hath quiver full of them.
Hank Smith:	22:43	Yes. Children are a heritage of the Lord.
John Bytheway:	22:47	Yeah. Especially if they'll help you do the dishes, then it's really fun.

Hank Smith: 22:52 I'm going to gather my little arrows together tonight and say, "Come here you little arrows, let me hug you."

Michael McLean: 22:59 When my daughter was three, I thought, how am I going to teach her the gospel when there's so many things I believe I can't explain? I believe Jesus came to earth, died on the cross, three days later was resurrected. Believe it, can't explain it. I believe he went into the garden of Gethsemane and somehow took on the pains and the sins of the universe. Believe it. Can't explain it. If I can't explain so much of the stuff that I believe in, what can I give my three-year-old?

Michael McLean: 23:30 Well, this will not surprise you, this was my primary song. I said, "If you don't get anything else, try to get this." And it goes, you know I believe in you, even though I can't explain it. Please help me to understand all that you've done, why you are the son of our father above. But most of all, teach me to love. You know I believe in you, but it's been so long since you lived here. Someday when you come to stay, we'll still be friends because we've been such friends from the start. Lord I love you with all of my heart. You know I believe in you, and love you with all of my heart.

Hank Smith: 24:37 It's no wonder Beethoven said music can change the world. It seems to me when I read these Psalms, Michael, that the writer here is trying to just say something over and over, trying to get a feeling across, isn't that right? That in music, I want to communicate a feeling that's in my heart to others. I'm looking at Psalm 136. Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, verse one and two start that way. So does verse three. Oh, give thanks to the Lord of Lords for his mercy, chesed, endureth forever. And Michael, as a songwriter, how do we get into the heart and soul of the writer of the Psalms? You can sense that there's a yearning in there for a feeling to come across, right?

Michael McLean: 25:29 As I said earlier, wouldn't it be great if David sang them to us? And we'd listen and we'd go, geez, they liked that when you were around, that was your... What if they were hip hop? What if the message that spoke to people then what if the poems were basically what rap poems are? I mean, it was a kind of a rhythm. What if it was more the rhythm of it that moved people? As a guy who grew up on the Tab Choir, we think so much, this is what is reverent. This is what's meaningful. And I remember when I was working on my oratorio about the garden of Gethsemane, I got a lot of pushback, because why are you making up an allegorical oratorio?

- Michael McLean: 26:15 Handel just took the scriptures and made the music spectacular. Handel's music, there is no better music than what Handel wrote from those scriptures. Well, that's not my gift. I'm a reverend, it's great. But if I'm going to present whatever Heavenly Father's gave me that's unique, and present that to the world. It's kind of represented in what I'm doing here. Oh, this is the way Michael sees the garden. This is the way Michael understands Christmas with the forgotten carols. Oh, this is the way Michael sees relationships with his kids in this song. And so I've been just exploring it so long, and I think the only way you get into the heart of it is if the person gets the privilege, not of just reading it, but of feeling it.
- Michael McLean: 27:08 You can tell from this, I don't sing great. I got to tell you this really fast. This is an amazing revelation to me. When I was working on The Ark, the musical from which Hold On, the Light Will Come, came. I was on Broadway in a room with 400 people and Steven Schwartz, the guy who wrote Wicked and Godspell and Prince of Egypt and my hero, and he had been mentoring young people writing shows, and he had written a show about Noah's Ark called Children of Eden. Second act was about that. And here I was getting mentored with this musical Kevin Kelly and I wrote about the ark.
- Michael McLean: 27:49 I'm so glad I was young. One night he said, "Here's what we're going to do different tonight. We're going to do dueling pianos." Dueling pianos with Steven Schwartz. And he says, "Mike, here's what we'll do. We'll be in the room in front of everybody. I'll talk about the songs I wrote about Noah's Ark, how I came to them and I'll sing them. Then you talk about the songs you wrote about Noah's Ark and you sing them." And of course, during this, I realized why he was genius, academy award-winning God-human, Stephen Schwartz and I was a high counselor in Hebrew.
- Michael McLean: 28:26 So anyway, but I'm going through this. And I had this moment where I talked about, Hold On, the Light Will Come. And I played it like I just played it for you. And then in between the moments people were having wine and cheese, and this was not a LDS crowd, but just people in showbiz, theater people, and a guy comes up to me and he says, "Can I talk to you?" And he pulled me aside. He said, "You don't sing, do you?" I said, "Well, no. I'm really not a singer." I said, "But tonight was not about..." Because they would bring in great Broadway legends to sing all of our songs. But tonight was not about that.
- Michael McLean: 29:05 He says, "No, you really don't sing." And I said, "And I really heard you the first time. I get it." And he said, "Yeah, I've been

listening to some of the Broadway's greatest singers sing these songs for these new musicals." And then he whispers to me, this was life changing for me. He said, "So could you explain to me what I was feeling when you sang the song that I haven't been feeling when real singers sing the song?" And that was a light bulb went off in my head.

Michael McLean: 29:46

If it's true, if you work hard enough, one of the things Steven Schwartz taught me, he says, "Just because you want to do a really cool thing about good ideas and you have great intentions, the bar is higher. You can't get away with I got a great intention, you have to like my song. No, you got to learn how to write great songs." You can't just say, "But I meant to make the world happy and live." And if you're a Mormon and you're trying to keep kids on the straight and narrow and keep the covenants, try to write a song with celestial in it. I mean, there's not a lot of rhymes that are going down with that.

Michael McLean: 30:21

But here's the thing, and I finally gave up on fighting it. If the song speaks truth, if I write a song and I can put it on the altar so that I could be altered and others may be altered by it. And then it's like Brother of Jared, I put the stones out there and say, "This is the best I could do." There may be another way, but Heavenly Father, will you touch the song? Not because I'm so cool, but if this could help somebody, including me. I tried a lot of other things as I think Brother of Jared did. I tried other plans. I tried windows. I had this great idea. No, here's the best I could do. These are just stones by a not-that-great songwriter, but I've put them on the altar and I said, "Your turn, touch him."

Michael McLean: 31:14

And what's been so tender to me is he's touched them, me, clinically depressed, challenged, unhealthy, filled with faith crisis, families with all kinds of anxiety, all kinds of problems, all kinds of heartache. If he'll help my songs maybe speak to somebody, he'll touch anybody who's willing to put the stones out there I think. If he'll touch your podcast, to have it reach all the people it reaches and goes beyond, he can help the guy that's sitting there right now, listening to this saying, "Oh, but he's not going to touch mine," because we keep telling ourselves if they talk about the light on the path. What if you're me? What if you're begging for some light?

Michael McLean: 32:10

You have made films seen by hundreds of millions of people in several languages all over the world and you have a crisis in your family and you beg God for the light, and it's dark. No, "Hey, I gave the great prayer. I gave my all, I made my new covenant, get me through next week." Nothing, nothing. And I make a covenant with him in a prayer that says, "Okay, I will

trust you. It's been two years of darkness, I will show up and shut up. I will keep the promises I no longer feel. Just get me through." And as I'm saying this prayer, I think, well, this is a great prayer. Light's going to show up maybe five weeks from now and I'll give a great talk on the podcast about the song and the light in my path showed up, because I said my prayer seven more years.

- Michael McLean: 33:05 And thinking, what did I do? I'm going to the temple with my wife every week. I'm paying tithing. What could I possibly have done to make you mad at me? Just a little more light, and all I'm promising is I'll keep the promises my heart no longer feels, for nine years. And if there's somebody out there who hears the Psalm about say your prayers and the light to your path will get you going, and you think it must be me. The reason God has not revealed the light is because the word which is Jesus, doesn't want to walk with me, he doesn't like me. For some reason I haven't even figured out.
- Michael McLean: 33:45 And I am here to bear witness, whether you keep it in or not. I want to speak to that guy. I want to speak to his heart. And I want to tell him that he has never not been with you. You feel the abandonment because there are lessons you can't learn any other way. He is in and all through things. And the only voice in your head that says, "Well, you're not hearing it because you're not worthy," does not come from God. That comes from an adversary who wants to tell you're not worthy, you're not good enough, it's not okay if you didn't get everything perfect. It is the voice that right now in your heart, he speaks, as the scriptures are shared with you, that says, "I am in it all with you. I am the light. The word the light, that's me, and I'm not going anywhere."
- Michael McLean: 34:43 And when I learned that, when my moment of being born again interestingly enough came with a download of songs from my father in heaven that answered nine years of darkness in a language that only I understood. And then I realized, oh my gosh, that's when my praises changed for forever.
- Hank Smith: 35:09 Beautiful. Psalm 136 has one phrase that is said over and over and over, "For his mercy endureth forever," verse one. Verse two, "For his mercy endureth forever." Verse three, "For his mercy endureth forever." I could keep going all the way through 26 verses, "For his mercy endureth forever." Are we getting that message? I've heard you talk about getting perfection and coming to Christ in the right order, John.

- John Bytheway: 35:39 The closing lines of Moroni, "Yea come unto Christ and be perfected in him." And the sequence of that is not come unto Christ, but make sure you're perfect before you come. I'm not good enough to come, I got to perfect myself or something like that. No, no, no. Be perfected in him. That sequence. Sister Chieko Okazaki, she wrote a book called Lighten Up. On page 176 she said, "Jesus is not waiting for us to be perfect." And I just love that opening line because Hank that would be a long wait. It's like that old Chinese proverb, he who waits for roast duck to fly into mouth must wait a very long time. You've never heard that one.
- John Bytheway: 36:28 Jesus is not waiting for us to be perfect. Perfect people don't need a savior. He came to save us in our imperfections. He is the Lord of the living, and the living make mistakes. He's not embarrassed by us, angry at us or shocked. He wants us in our brokenness, in our unhappiness, in our guilt and our grief. And do you know what I love about that, Hank? It always reminds me of the prodigal son, as soon as he turned from a great distance, his father ran to him. His father saw him and ran. He'll take us where we're at. And so I like that sequence; come unto Christ, just come.
- Hank Smith: 37:09 I've often found, John and Michael, that people need multiple witnesses that God is merciful. For some reason we don't believe it. So I have some witnesses here. This is Elder Gong, "We may for a time lose our way. God lovingly assures us no matter where we are or what we have done, there is no point of no return. He waits, ready to embrace us."
- Hank Smith: 37:38 This is Elder Renlund, "Even if we've been a conscious deliberate sinner or have repeatedly faced failure and disappointment. The moment we decide to try again, the Atonement of Christ can help us." Elder Cook, "It is never too late to make the Savior's atonement the foundation of our faith and lives." Elder Uchtdorf, "No matter how often or how far we fall, the light of Christ ever burns brightly. And even in the deepest night, if we but step toward him, his light will consume the shadows and reignite our souls." One more, I know this is multiple witnesses, but we need this. President Ballard, "Everyone loses his or her way at some point to some degree, it is the atoning sacrifice of the Savior that can return us home."
- Hank Smith: 38:30 Psalm 136 is for his mercy endureth forever. This isn't a message we should ever stop preaching that God is merciful. We need to tell our children and our grandchildren God is merciful, because too often it's, I'm not good enough. I don't do

things right. God doesn't want anything to do with me. When that is simply not true. God wants everything to do with you.

- John Bytheway: 39:00 Yeah. Is it section 64? "I the Lord forgive sins." I just love underlining that. And can I add one more? Alma 33:16, "Thou art angry, oh Lord with his people because they will not understand thy mercies which thou has bestowed upon them because of thy son." And notice, they will not understand. What's the difference between will not and cannot?
- Hank Smith: 39:23 I know it's there, I just refuse.
- John Bytheway: 39:25 I refuse. I can't forgive myself maybe, they will not understand thy mercies. And I've always loved that verse, that no, it's not just about everybody else. That's about you too.
- Michael McLean: 39:38 I had a heart attack a year ago and the first song that came to me after I recovered from my heart attack, this is so great, this is a tiny short song, but it ties in exactly John, with what you were talking about. This is what Heavenly Father sent me. God said, love your enemy. I cried for help. My heart had frozen up on me, and it won't melt. I fought the inner demon since I was just a child, I've been kicking and I've been screaming, because I could not be reconciled, but God said, love your enemy. And so I've prayed to see things so differently and not be afraid, to find a way to love him, to change the way I felt about my life long enemy, the one I've fought relentlessly, but now my heart is teaching me that I can love myself. I think today I can obey and finally love myself.
- Hank Smith: 41:08 That's beautiful. That is fantastic, Michael. It fits exactly with what we were talking about there, Psalm 136, "For his mercy endureth forever."
- John Bytheway: 41:25 Endureth forever.
- Hank Smith: 41:27 Michael, John, I feel like we are just, in our episode today, we're just feeling the spirit of the Psalms. I was interested in where the name of the lesson in the manual came from this week. The lesson is entitled, let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord. And that is actually the last verse of the Psalms. The parting thought from the Psalms is let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord. I feel like we've done that a little bit today, Michael.
- Michael McLean: 42:00 And thinking about how we've talked about the light so much and the light that's in and all through things and that guides our

path and how we praise it. Think of this as my praise song about the source of that light. I believe there's a light, and it shines in everyone. And I believe it's the light of the world. And I believe there's a voice that whispers there's a choice, and our joy will come from choosing what is right. And always seeking his light that shines in one and all, and lifts us when we fall. And it answers when we call, I believe there's a light that shines in everyone. Yes, I believe it's the light of the world.

Michael McLean: 43:14 And I believe there's a voice that whispers there's a choice. And the joy will come from choosing what is right. And always seeking his light that shines in one and all and lifts us when we fall and answers when we call. It's the saviors light I'm singing of, he is the light, the truth and the light. Celebrating the light, it shines in everyone. We're celebrating the light of the world, and we all can rejoice when a heart makes the choice to reflect the joy and keep it shining bright by celebrating the light. And our joy will burn so bright when we follow his light. Celebrating the light.

Hank Smith: 44:50 Absolutely wonderful. When you tap into the spirit of the Psalms with songs themselves.

John Bytheway: 44:58 Hank, I think I've told you this, but in our stake, we have a Spanish branch, a Portuguese branch, and we actually have an Alzheimer's branch, a memory center. We have a branch presidency there. When I was on the high council, I'd have a chance to go speak there sometimes they're just looking for speakers. And the fun part is, and you'll love this, Michael, they'll say, "Is there any chance you could sing instead of speak?" Because something happens to those folks when you start using music, there's a part of them that wakes up and they'll start singing with you, songs that they knew in their childhood. So I get up there and try to give a talk, but usually I'd grab one of my kids, take my Michael McLean guitar and say, "Let's just sing I'm a Child of God for them today." And they start singing with you. Their spouses just love it when their spouse kind of wakes up, comes back a little bit, and it's magical what music can do that way. And I've seen it happen, it's pretty cool.

Michael McLean: 45:57 My dad had Alzheimer's and lived with us and we went through all of that ordeal. And at the end he started saying, "I'm sorry I don't know your name," look at me, and then he'd say, "But I'm pretty sure I like you." And I said, "Okay, dad, I'll take that." In his final hours, this is a really sweet memory that I hadn't thought of till now about songs. My dad was on morphine, he would wake up, they'd give him morphine, and of course with

his Alzheimer's, he didn't know where he was so he would panic. It was just really sad. And my mother had died a year earlier, but he was in this facility and I called my son, Jeff, the singer, who was doing Legally Blonde, national tour of Legally Blonde. And I said, "Grandpa's gone."

Michael McLean: 46:46 And of course he gets on the plane and he comes, and this is the thing that got me. He came and sat with us and when my father would wake up terrified, I mean, you can't bear to see your dad that scared, not know where he was and ready for his next injection of morphine. My son would sing, acapella, his favorite hymns. Like you said, John, something happens to the... He calmed down. The agony was not the same.

Michael McLean: 47:18 Years ago, Truman Madsen invited Jeff and I to go with him to Liberty Jail when he was showing some of his former missionaries, given a tour of that period. And of course we loved him and the way he talked about the prophet Joseph, but when we were in Carthage Jail, after two days of Truman telling the great Truman stories, he turns to Jeff and said, "Could you sing seven versus acapella of A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief so that we can kind of set the tone before I bear my witness about what happened?" And there's my kid, like he did with my dad, singing, just a voice, those songs and those messages in that way. And to think that the prophet Joseph, knowing that the end was coming, would say, "Could you sing to me?" The comfort and the power like you said, with the Alzheimer's, I don't care who you are, could you sing to me? We grow up with our mothers singing melodies to us, singing lullabies to us. It's one of the great gifts for sure.

Hank Smith: 48:32 When you tap into the spirit of the Psalms with songs themselves, I think we've gotten to the purpose of why these are recorded for us. Before we let him go, John, we need to have Michael play and sing some of these songs that we all know so well.

Michael McLean: 48:49 Oh, here's one, speaking of teachers. I had a Sunday school class of 15 year olds and we were teaching the scriptures and I woke up one morning in a panic at five o'clock because the lesson that day was about how the good shepherd leaves the 90 and nine to go after the lost soul. And I thought, wait a second. This is a message that Jesus is going to leave the ones who showed up to church to go find the inactive guy that's out there. And I said, this is not going to work for the... I had a class that was so faithful that they recited the 14th article of faith, which is, we believe in meetings, we hope for meetings, we've endured many meetings. We'll have to be able to endure all meetings. If

there are excuses for meetings, we seek after... I mean, these kids never missed a meeting. These are the most faithful kids in the world.

- Michael McLean: 49:49 And I thought, how does this relate to them? It's almost as if we're saying, if you want a lot of attention from Jesus, go get drunk and leave and then, oh, we're going to go find you, because then you'll be precious in his... I mean, I didn't know what to do. And of course I turned then to my language and it turns out that the song was the lesson. So what I did, I didn't live that far, I live in a big log house with a cool Grand Piano.
- Michael McLean: 50:19 So I drove the van over to the church, I loaded all the kids. I said, "We're having church at the piano in my house today. Come." And I also picked up some chocolate milk. And so if I got a donut and a chocolate milk, we're going to be fine. So I bring my little class and I said, "This is the lesson. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to. You don't have to editorialize on it. You don't have to pontificate it. You don't have to do anything but listen, eat your donuts and chocolate cake and I'll take you back to church. This was my lesson."
- Michael McLean: 51:00 I am one of the 90 and nine. I'm not perfect, but basically I'm doing fine, I have not lost my way. And I'm not going to stray. I'm just one of the 90 and nine. And I'm here in the heart of the fold. I'm not mindless, but I try to do like I'm told. I'm not tempted to run or become the lost one, I'm just here in the heart of the fold. So why is my shepherd coming this way towards me? He's holding his arms out and he's calling my name. Yes, he's calling my name.
- Michael McLean: 51:46 How can this be? You see I'm just one of the 90 and nine. I've stumbled and fallen, but I've kept in line. I'm not one he must seek, I'm not that unique. I'm just one of the 90 and nine. So why is my shepherd treating me like a lost lamb? He's searching to find me and he's holding me now. Yes, he's holding me now. And he's teaching me who I am. So why am I feeling like I'm the only one here? It's like I'm his favorite, and he takes me aside, and he sweetly confides these remarkable words in my ear. He says, "You're one of the 90 and nine. Have you any idea how brightly you shine? You are safe in this fold and this time you were told," sorry, "that I know where you've been. So I know where you'll be because all your life you've been following me. You are more than just one of those sands of the sea or just one of the 90 at nine. No kids, you are mine. You are mine. You are mine. Yes, you're mine. Guess I'm one of the 90 and nine."

Hank Smith:	54:06	Absolutely wonderful. What a day with Michael McLean. John, we have been so blessed today.
Michael McLean:	54:14	Well, thank you so much for having me. I'm kind of empty now, and for a guy who who's hoping that transplant can't come too soon, but I want you to know that I have a couple hours a day that I am kind of functional, and I was energized by just being around you, partly out of respect for you. And partly out of love for what you're doing. But I just told Heavenly Father as I was driving here, I said, "Help me be present enough to not pick a song that I want to sing, but a song that you would have me sing. Help me somehow navigate my way through these insights that these wonderful gospel scholars that are fun and wonderful and spiritual that'll be there, and help me not fall apart. Help me just get through to the end." And for me, this is it now, I am done.
Michael McLean:	55:10	And I'm going to get home and take a nap for a couple days. I want you to know, and I hope you feel how deeply I mean this, I love you. I love your uniqueness. I love the way you see things. I love the way you study things. I love the way you interpret things. I love the willingness that you are to know how to quote. I just think you're great, and you've been placed in my life and it's a blessing to me, and I'm sure many others. You don't need this validation, I know, but I just want you to know so no matter what my future may hold that you know my friend, my songwriter buddy, Michael McLean really, really loves me. Amen.
Hank Smith:	56:02	We love you too, Michael. We love you too. We are praying for you. And we know all of our listeners will say a prayer for you.
John Bytheway:	56:10	Absolutely.
Hank Smith:	56:12	That the transplant will go well. We want to thank Michael McLean for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week as we come back with another episode of Follow Him.

WHY DOES GOD NEED TO BE PRAISED SO MUCH?



- Hank Smith: 00:04 Hello, my friends. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the wonderful, amazing closest friend, John Bytheway. If you've been following followHIM Favorites this year, you know that we take a single question from this week's lesson.
- Hank Smith: 00:20 Well, John, I wanted to ask you a question. The title of this week's lesson is, Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. It's all about the Book of Psalms. My question for you which I've received before from students is, "Why does God need to be praised so much? Is there something about Him where He says, 'If you have breath, you should be praising me.'" Wow.
- Hank Smith: 00:47 John, what do you say to someone who says, "Why does God need to be praised so much?" Or even that, "Why does He need to be prayed too so much? Why does He need to be glorified so much?" What do you say to that?
- John Bytheway: 00:59 Boy, that's such a good question. I think when we think of why we might want to hear someone praise us is a different reason. I think for God and boy, you can help me with your thoughts, Hank, but it tells us where our hearts and where our minds are. If our hearts are on gratitude, on devotion, on our covenants, I think that our praise is not helping Him as much as it's helping us. It reveals what's going on with us and what's going on in our hearts.
- John Bytheway: 01:29 Some of these Psalms are like that. They're so different that way, because it's not God's words through a prophet, but it's our words about God and, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He leads me besides still waters." It's not like God's going, "Okay, I need more of that." But look how it changed the writer of that, to be thinking and pondering, and how it filled him with gratitude, and can fill us with gratitude. That's where I would go with that. What do you think?

Hank Smith: 01:58 Yeah, I think when we say, "Let everything have breath praise the Lord." I think the Lord knows that the praising changes the praiser not the praisee, all right. Where you and I, we love to be praised because people say, "Oh John and Hank, you're so great. Thanks for doing this." We think, "Oh, thank you. Please don't stop." Like yeah.

John Bytheway: 02:21 It doesn't stop.

Hank Smith: 02:21 They don't stop. But for the Lord, He realizes that when we praise Him, we change. It's a lot like I think in prayer, I read this in the Bible dictionary when it comes to prayer. It says, "Prayer or praising in this case, is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into a correspondence, alignment with each other. The object of prayer or praise is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but have been made conditional on our asking for them or praising for them. Blessings require some work and effort on our part. Before we can obtain them, prayer is a form of work." I like the idea of God saying, "If you will spend your time in praising me, you are spending your time aligning with me."

John Bytheway: 03:21 Yeah. It reminds me of Joseph Smith's prayer in Liberty Jail. That was so powerful and beautiful, "How long?" The answer that he got, he didn't suddenly pop out outside of the jail.

Hank Smith: 03:33 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 03:34 His perspective changed, "Thy suffering and thine afflictions will be but a small moment." He learned like you just said, the will of the Lord. The circumstances didn't change much but the perspective changed dramatically when he, what was the word you used? He started to align his will with God's or at least learn what it was.

Hank Smith: 03:54 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 03:55 That helps me a little bit.

Hank Smith: 03:56 I think we see that same thing, don't you? In 2 Nephi 4, where Nephi is in a really bad place. He starts to praise the Lord. He first starts out talking about how terrible he is.

John Bytheway: 04:09 "Wretched man that I am." I would love to be as wretched as Nephi.

Hank Smith: 04:14 Yeah. That's the first word I think of with Nephi. Oh, wretched. Right. But that's what he thinks of. And then he starts to align his will. If you read 2 Nephi 4:19, he says, "I groan because of my sins. Nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted." So in his act of writing, and praying, and praising, you can feel his alignment changing. "My God has been my support. He has led me through my afflictions in the wilderness. He's confounded my enemies." He talks about, "I've been carried away in vision. If this is the case, why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow?"

Hank Smith: 04:59 Towards the very end, he starts to praise the Lord. "Oh Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever." I think this is a good example. 2 Nephi 4 is a good example of the praising changing the praiser.

John Bytheway: 05:14 Right.

Hank Smith: 05:15 Does that make sense? And not really, it didn't change the Lord at all. But wow, it brought Nephi in alignment with the spirit he needed, to have that enthusiasm to continue forward.

John Bytheway: 05:26 Look at what he started to do. It's like the counsel we get in that hymn, Count your blessings and name them one by one. He started counting all the things the Lord had done for him and that changed him. The Lord knew that he had done those things, but when he started reflecting on it, I think he got out of that place where he was. I don't think anyone would say to Nephi, when he said, "Oh, wretched man that I am." I don't think any of us would say, "Come on Nephi, I don't have low self-esteem."

John Bytheway: 05:55 This was one of his greatest moments when he recognized his dependence on God. We both joked, "I'd love to be as wretched as Nephi." Maybe he was sad that he was going-

Hank Smith: 06:07 He is struggling.

John Bytheway: 06:07 ... to keep his family together, whatever. "I was angry with my brothers, whatever." But as he put his reliance on God, God didn't need the praise. But look what it did for Nephi by the end, that's a perfect example to use, Hank I think.

Hank Smith: 06:20 Yeah, so at night when you kneel down to pray and you might think, "Well, God already knows what I need. God already knows what I've done. Why do I have to pray?" It's for you. It's not for Him. It's for you to find out some things about you. Not

for God to find out some things about you or for God to find out some things about God. It's for you. And when you sing the hymns in church, we've been talking about Psalms so much. Singing, taking part in these Psalms, with the song of the saints can actually change you. It can change your heart. It can soften your heart.

- Hank Smith: 06:56 I know that by the time I'm done singing a sacrament hymn, my heart is a little bit different. Isn't it? It's a little bit different. It's a little bit softer. It's a little bit more repentant. That act of praising God in that hymn changed me, not Him. But man, it changed me. I think when the Lord says, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." He means, "I want you in alignment with me."
- John Bytheway: 07:19 Yeah. I remember in the MTC having, I don't know, a thousand, couple of thousand of us singing, Called to Serve, together. That changed me. That was an amazing experience to feel like looking left and right and seeing all of these elders and sisters, and feeling part of this. I bet you had the same type of experience. The Lord knew why we were there but it changed me.
- John Bytheway: 07:48 When I was on my mission and having a moment where I felt pretty isolated alone, me and my companion, but I could remember, "No, I've locked elbows with thousands of us in the MTC and we're doing this. We're going to go gather Israel together." It changed me. I don't know about you, but you're nodding. I think you remember those times singing with an army of missionaries, how fun that is.
- Hank Smith: 08:12 Well, you can feel it. It literally changes your soul every time you do it. So go to church this weekend and sing the songs. Praise the Lord in your songs or on your own. On your own, sing, turn on some of that wonderful Gospel music and sing, and see if that act of praising God doesn't change you as the praiser.
- Hank Smith: 08:36 Thanks for joining us on followHIM Favorites. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. Come back next week, we'll do another followHIM Favorites.