



“Thy Faith Hath Saved Thee”

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:

Why does Jesus heal and rescue some and not others? Dr. Joshua Sears examines the relationship between faith and rescue and Jesus healing Gentiles, controlling the weather, and healing people from a distance.

Part 2:

Dr. Joshua Sears continues to examine the relationship between faith, miracles, and how Jesus Christ brings peace to life’s storms. Dr. Sears relates that discipleship involves action and sacrifice.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Joshua Sears
- 00:50 Introduction of Dr. Joshua Sears
- 02:18 Faith and healing overview
- 05:37 Our relationship with God
- 08:55 God does everything for our benefit
- 09:45 Nephi considers destruction of Jerusalem
- 13:27 Foundation of God’s love through tribulation
- 15:35 Healing the Centurion’s servant
- 19:33 Jesus can heal Gentiles and from a distance
- 22:38 Parallel to Moroni and the Brother of Jared
- 26:32 Roman Centurions
- 27:50 Doublets in Luke
- 31:22 Geography of Nain and Capernaum
- 33:03 Dr. Sears shares a story from his mission
- 37:06 Jesus calms a storm
- 40:19 John shares a story where a farm worker can sleep through a storm
- 42:26 End of Part 1–Dr. Joshua Sears

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Joshua Sears
- 00:08 Jesus calms the sea and Psalm 107
- 02:53 Cowardice and fear and Jesus orders chaos
- 05:34 Joseph Smith asked God if He cared when people suffer
- 06:15 The story behind “Master, the Tempest is Raging”
- 13:02 Lloyd Newell and “Well With My Soul”
- 17:38 *Come, Follow Me* activity
- 19:41 Jesus is more than moral teacher
- 20:22 Emma Lou Thayne story about mental illness and “Where Can I Turn for Peace?”
- 29:03 Matthew 8 and Jesus stilling the storm
- 35:01 Discipleship parallel to traversing in a boat
- 40:27 Elder Bednar story regarding faith, healing, and timing
- 46:37 Depression and faith in Jesus
- 51:56 End of Part II–Dr. Joshua Sears

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Joshua Sears grew up in Southern California and served in the Chile Osorno Mission. He received a BA in ancient Near Eastern studies from BYU, where he taught at the Missionary Training Center and volunteered as an EMT. He received an MA from The Ohio State University and a PhD in Hebrew Bible at The University of Texas at Austin. His research interests include Israelite prophecy, marriage and families in the ancient world, and the publication history of Latter-day Saint scripture. He has presented at regional and national meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature, BYU Education Week, the Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, and the Leonardo Museum Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls. His wife, Alice, is from Hong Kong and plays in Bells at Temple Square; they live in Lindon, Utah, with their five children.

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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:	00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:15	As together, we follow him.
Hank Smith:	00:20	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, I'm your host. I'm here with my faithful co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome, John Bytheway, back to another episode of followHIM.
John Bytheway:	00:30	I'll try to live up to that adjective. That's a Semper Fidelis thing.
Hank Smith:	00:33	John, you are as faithful as they come. You're as good as gold in my opinion.
John Bytheway:	00:38	Right back at you.
Hank Smith:	00:39	The name of the lesson is Thy Faith Hath Saved Thee. Speaking of our lesson today, we brought on a Bible expert who's been with us before. John, can you tell everybody who's with us?
John Bytheway:	00:50	Yes. I was so happy to look at our little schedule and see that Joshua Sears is back with us again because we had such a wonderful time before. Dr. Sears grew up in Southern California, served in the Chile Osorno Mission. He received a bachelor's in Ancient Near Eastern Studies from BYU where he taught at the Missionary Training Center and volunteered as an EMT. So he was an MTC EMT, I guess. He received a master's from Ohio State University and a PhD in the Hebrew Bible at the University of Texas at Austin. His research interests include Israelite

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- Dr. Joshua Sears: 01:54 Thank you.
- Hank Smith: 01:56 Yeah, Josh was with us three times last year for the Old Testament. If we have any listeners who are new to our program, go back and find those episodes with Josh from last year. You will love each of them. They each have their own unique flavor, but man, they all just will touch your heart. They're so good. So we're excited to have Josh back. Welcome, Josh.
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 02:17 Thanks.
- Hank Smith: 02:18 Let's just hand the reins over to you, Josh. We're in Matthew 8, Mark 2 and 4 and Luke 7 today. So the synoptic gospels, we're going to spend our time in Matthew, Mark and Luke. But where do you want to start when it comes to these three sections of scripture?
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 02:35 Well, I liked how you pointed out that in the Come Follow Me manual, the title of this lesson is Thy Faith Hath Saved Thee. And then the first line in the Individuals and Families Manual says one of the clearest messages in the New Testament is that Jesus Christ is a healer. Both that first line and the title are themes that you see running throughout these chapters. You see a lot of people in desperate need of healing and rescue, and then it frequently brings up in these stories explicitly or implicitly the need for faith. And you see these two ideas interlocking and bouncing off each other constantly. So I think that's going to be an important dynamic to explore this week is the healing and faith.
- Hank Smith: 03:20 Beautiful. I think I could use more healing in my life. I bet there's many listeners who would probably agree with me and say, "Hank, yeah, there's certain relationships that need healing. There's physical healing. There's perhaps emotional healing that needs to take place." So is this the overview of what we're going to look at today?

Dr. Joshua Sears: 03:38 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 03:39 So Josh, there's a number of stories I think we could cover in these chapters. Where do you want to start?

Dr. Joshua Sears: 03:44 Yeah. What you find in these stories is that this interplay between healing and rescue and faith is not simple. You see a lot of people struggling with this in these stories. And I think there's a fundamental concept that many of them struggle to understand or fully exercise trust in, and that leads to some of the challenges that they face. Maybe to illustrate this, I'll tell a quick story, go back in time. I started serving my mission in the summer of 2004. In missionary history, the fall of 2004 was a pretty eventful time, that's when Preach My Gospel was first released. So I had just been out in the field three, four months. We all knew that something big was coming, we were all excited and looking forward to that. And I remember the zone conference where we were all sitting in the audience and the mission president said something like, "Boy, have I got something for you!" And then the doors burst open and the assistants wheeled in these dollies with cardboard boxes on them and everyone in the room was going ballistic.

04:41 We were just going nuts. We were so excited and they pulled these books out of the boxes and we started passing them around and we couldn't get them fast enough. And we were looking at full color pictures, this exciting new take on missionary work. And it was just a very dramatic time. I remember one thing that struck us was that lesson one was now the message of the restoration. Before that, in the discussions, you didn't bring up the apostasy or the restoration until the third discussion. So having that front and center first thing was something that was very notable to us. But I also remember thinking that the first principle of lesson one looked oddly out of place to me like it didn't match. That principle is titled God Is Our Loving Heavenly Father, and to me that just didn't seem to mesh with the rest of the lesson which is history and dispensations and prophets getting called in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and all sorts of other things. So I struggled with how to link that principle to everything else.

05:37 And eventually, I decided well it's just there so I can make sure that they believe in God because maybe if they're an atheist, then you have to stop and talk about some basics some more. So usually in my lessons just make sure, "Hey, do you believe in God?" And they'd say, "Yes." And I go, "Great," and I move on to the rest of the lesson. Now looking back over the years since then, I'm thinking I didn't do that quite as well as I should have

because I've come to appreciate that that idea is maybe the most important thing in the lesson and nothing else makes sense unless it's in light of that principle that I was taking for granted. It doesn't just posit that God exists, that statement is a declaration that God is our Father. We have that familial relationship and proclaims that he loves us, which I've come to understand, is not something we should take for granted.

06:27 That is something both as a matter of formal theology, a lot of people have disagreed with or struggled to believe that God can love us, make him so vulnerable by that emotional attachment to us. And even if you do believe that in your head, a lot of people struggle to really believe that when you're going through difficult, excruciating things and we wonder, "Well does he really love us? Does he really love me?" Especially that's something that a lot of people struggle with. So I've come to re-appreciate the apostles placing that principle first thing in the lesson. And I re-appreciated this three years ago when the apostles in the first presidency reissued, you remember, the Bicentennial Restoration Proclamation, April 2020. It's titled The Restoration of the Fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and given the subject matter, I might have expected it to open with a line like, "In the spring of 1820." It does use that line, but that's the beginning of the second paragraph. The first line reads, "We solemnly proclaim that God loves his children in every nation of the world."

07:38 And to me, that was quite striking that they chose again to highlight and front that as the very first thing. The second sentence is on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The third sentence is the resurrection. So those are also very important things. But before even those, they highlight the love of God for all of us as his children. I think there's something profound about that because unless we fully appreciate that God truly deeply cares for us and loves us, none of the rest of it is going to make sense. There's such power in truly understanding that our Heavenly Father really truly loves us. And if we can lock this in our minds that God is our father, he's good, he loves us, we therefore have the ability to understand that anything he does with us, including the painful experiences we go through, is ultimately for our good. It's for our progress. It's for our eternal benefit because a loving God would otherwise not subject us to those things. It helps us make sense of so much of what's going on.

Hank Smith: 08:50 Wow. Well said, Josh. Thanks so much for that. What a great way to start this lesson.

John Bytheway: 08:55 What that reminds me of is 2 Nephi 26:24, "He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world, for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him." Of course, that's the Savior, but it sounds so simple. But no, that's a very important idea. It's he's not a detached God that just created things and just set it in motion and unattached from what's going to happen next. So I feel like our whole study, the Old Testament last year, I kept getting that impression over and over again how involved God wanted to be with his people and kept coming after them even when they left him.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 09:38 Yeah. And I think in the scriptures, the prophets understood this and really understanding this fundamental concept helps us appreciate a little better what they were saying. Well if we can use another Book of Mormon example, I'll just go to First Nephi Chapter 1, remember that Lehi in that opening Book of Mormon chapter, he's swept up into this vision he goes to heaven, right? Sees God and all the angels and everything. And in Verse 12, in heaven, he's handed a book to read. And this is what he reads in the book in Verse 13. "Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations! Yea, and many things did my father read concerning Jerusalem, that it should be destroyed, and the inhabitants thereof, many should perish by the sword, and many should be carried away captive into Babylon."

10:27 And that is a really... We've got to stop and think about what impact this probably would've had on Lehi. This is where all his friends and family live. This is where the temple is. This is the city of God where he's manifested so many miracles. So the idea that it's going to be destroyed and people either killed or carried off into captivity, this had to have been such a devastating tragedy. And that makes what he responds in Verse 14 almost completely baffling at first. Verse 14, "When my father had read and seen many great and marvelous things, he did exclaim many things unto the Lord, such as..." And you might expect him to say, "Come on now. No, please, anything but this," or some complaining. But he says, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Oh Lord God Almighty. Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power, and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the earth."

11:17 "And because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish. And after this manner was the language of my father in the praising of his God, for his soul did rejoice, and his whole heart was filled." It doesn't look like Verses 13 and 14 go together, they don't look like they match. And I think the only way to make sense of this is if we

assume that Lehi understood some fundamentals in a bigger picture than just the immediate tragedy of the destruction of Jerusalem. He had to have understood that God is our father, that God cares for us and he loves us and therefore whatever he does, even the painful things, is for our good and is going to lead to good. And we learned the Old Testament last year, we know the rest of the story that this ultimately was a positive thing in the history of the people of Judah here.

12:12 It was a tragedy that Jerusalem was destroyed. It was hard. We're not trying to make this rainbows and bunny rabbits here. But through that experience, they did repent, they recognized the error of their ways, they did come back into the covenant path, they did return to Jerusalem, they rebuilt the city and it prospered again. And in that big picture sense, you can see the Lord trying to work with these people to help them even through the hard things, the hard consequences that they themselves get them into through their poor choices. But yeah, unless you understand those fundamentals, which I think Lehi understood, we're not going to understand his reaction. And this is the power of understanding those fundamentals that when we go through our terrible tragedies, we can respond like Lehi recognizing the big picture and the purposes here and recognizing the mercy that's behind all the hard times and not just be devastated and blown over by the terrible things we go through.

John Bytheway: 13:05 He doesn't do anything, save it's for the benefit of the world and Lehi must have known that somehow this is what's going to happen, a loving God is going to use this somehow. That's interesting.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 13:15 Yeah. And maybe he didn't know all the details of how that's going to work, but he knew that that's where it's going to end up.

John Bytheway: 13:21 There's a loving reason behind all of this, or God can use it for a loving outcome.

Hank Smith: 13:27 What is the verse in the Doctrine and Covenants, John? When the saints first got to Missouri, the Lord told them, "This is not going to be easy." I think the idea was, "Oh, we're going to get to Zion and everything's going to be great." The Lord says, "You cannot behold with your natural eyes," this is section 58, Verse 3, "for the present time, the design of your God concerning the things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation. For after much tribulation come the blessings." It's that same principle here, Josh, is that I love

you. I love you. No matter what you're going through, you have to set it on the foundation of God's love.

- Dr. Joshua Sears: 14:08 Yeah, and this is crucial. The restoration for 200 years has been trying to rehabilitate the image of God to teach us that he loves us. And when we suffer, it's not punishment. So much of history, people have just been so quick to interpret every bad thing we go through as God's wrath and God trying to punish us and the revelations of the restoration have given us this ability to see no, that God loves us. And yes, sometimes he allows us to suffer the consequences of our foolish choices, but ultimately anything he allows and anything he does is meant for our immortality and eternal life.
- Hank Smith: 14:45 What you've been saying reminds me of a quote from Elder Orson F. Whitney, Josh. "No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our character, purifies our hearts, expands our souls and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God. And it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our father and mother in heaven." Josh, that seems to just dovetail perfectly with the way you've started us today.
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 15:30 Yeah. So why don't we dive in, look at these New Testament stories? We're not going to cover nearly everything that's in the assignment this week because you never can. It's just so full and rich. But we'll look at a few things and watch these people as they exercise faith, as they struggle with understanding the love of God and as they seek the healing and rescue that they're looking for. So maybe one place we can start is Matthew Chapter 8.
- Hank Smith: 15:52 I've noticed as we turn to Matthew that Matthew seems to chunk a lot of the miracles together in Matthew 8 and 9. Do you think he did that on purpose?
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 16:01 Yeah. One thing about the gospels is they don't present the life of Jesus in chronological order all the time. Most of them will start with his earlier life earliest and we'll end with the crucifixion, so you got a broad sense of chronology there. But in the middle, they'll present things not necessarily in chronological order. And one way you can tell that is by the fact that different gospels show things in a different order. So

somebody's not in order if any of them are. But another thing is that often certain stories will come together. Like in Mark Chapter 4 with the equivalent in Matthew 13, there's a whole bunch of parables. And maybe he did spend a whole afternoon just doing parable after parable, but it's also possible that for Mark, they simply thought, "I'm going to make a section and pull together some parables," or, "I'm going to have a section on healing stories. I'll have a section on confrontations with Pharisees." You get these clusters of similar stories which suggest that some of this is arranged thematically.

Hank Smith: 16:55 I was wondering if you were reading Matthew and you'd think, "Oh, we just went from the Sermon on the Mount straight to and all he does is miracle, miracle, miracle one after another." Instead, maybe Matthew put them all together to make a case of Jesus being a healer.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 17:09 So Matthew, beginning of Chapter 8... Actually, we'll start in Verse 5. This is the story of the centurion, and there's an equivalent story in Luke Chapter 7 at the beginning of Luke there. So we'll keep an eye on that, but we'll read from Matthew. We've got to pick one. Verse 5. "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him." So first thing we've got to note is the centurion is a leader in the Roman army that's related to the word for century or cent because got 100 people that he's over. So this is a Roman and decidedly not an Israelite that's going to be important in this story. So not an Israelite and someone who's got a fair level of authority as the Roman army is occupying Jewish lands here.

17:52 So this guy comes in Verse 6, says, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I'm a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this man, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh, and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it." He's recognizing who Jesus is. He recognizes Jesus' power and authority. Now, why is he saying, "You can't come under my roof," and citing all this authority stuff? You get a sense here that he's aware that it puts Jesus potentially in an awkward situation because Jews traditionally were not going into the home of a gentile and that could cause Jesus some trouble with Jews who were sensitive to that kind of a thing.

- 18:53 And when he says that, "I'm both under authority, I've got people over me, and I'm in authority, I've got people below me," he recognizes how a chain of command works, how authority works, and it seems to be a recognition that he here in coming to Jesus recognizes who has the real authority. He's saying here, "I know that you can do this. I don't want to put you in the awkward position of coming into my home. I know I'm a gentile, I know there's some issues there. But I know that even at your word, you don't even have to be present on site, you could heal my servant that I love."
- John Bytheway: 19:22 When he calls Jesus, "Lord," do we know from the Greek... I mean is he acknowledging his title and that tells us something about him too? What is the word, "Lord," in Greek that he's using?
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 19:33 The word he uses there in Greek is, "Kurios," which means Lord, and it can have a range of meanings. It can refer to a mortal human leader or Lord, we would use that just like in English. You can talk about the Lord of the manor, Lord of England. And it can also be used in this Jewish context refer to the Lord, meaning Jehovah, the God of Israel. So depending on the gospel and where you're reading, it can have some nuances of that higher meaning here. It's hard to know what exactly the centurion understood at this point, but clearly he knows enough about Jesus to recognize enough about him. So it's possible that he recognizes that he's more than just a mortal teacher here. He's coming here clearly in faith saying, "Not only do I trust that you can heal my servant, you can do it from a distance." So he recognizes the power and authority that's here.
- John Bytheway: 20:21 And there's one extra word in the Luke account that is not here in Matthew 8, 9. But in Luke, he says, "I am also a man under authority," acknowledging that, "I know that you are a man of authority," he's saying to the Savior which I think is interesting.
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 20:36 Yeah. And then in Verse 10, we get Jesus' reaction. "When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Jesus' response here is fascinating. He recognizes the exceedingly great faith of this man. Again, faith and healing are constantly bouncing off each other here. And he draws attention to the fact that this is a gentile. This is someone who's not part of the covenant people, was not raised on the

stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He wasn't raised living the law that was given to Moses. And yet, through his faith in Jesus, he's able to find the healing and rescue that he's looking for here.

21:36 And Jesus points out many of these people outside the covenant through the same process, their faith are going to be able to come and receive the same blessings of the covenant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The flip side is true as well. Many that inherit the covenant through their family if they lack faith are not going to receive those blessings. It's one of the many places in the gospels that highlights the fact that being born in the covenant is not an automatic ticket to heaven, it's your faith in Jesus Christ that ultimately is the determining factor here. In that sense, this is similar to the Book of Mormon will reiterate the same principle. The Book of Mormon is speaking to the remnants of Israel, but it's also trying to convince Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ. For example, the person in the Book of Mormon who's thinking the hardest about how do gentiles gain salvation is Moroni.

22:28 Moroni knows that the Book of Mormon's going to go to the gentiles first in the last days, it's going to be translated by a gentile. It's going to come forth through them to the remnant of Israel. So Moroni's thinking hard. What does it mean for these gentile people to be saved when they're not part of the covenant at least yet? And one book where Moroni explores that especially is the Book of Ether. You see in Ether that Moroni speaks directly to Latter-day gentiles constantly, more than anywhere else in the Book of Mormon where they're the direct named audience there. And it's a great place to explore this idea of gentiles salvation because the Jaredites people whose history he's abridging are gentiles. So Moroni looks at this as a great place to explore. So a couple years ago, the Maxwell Institute at BYU published a new series of books on the Book of Mormon called The Book of Mormon Brief Theological Introductions.

23:19 And The Ether Volume by Rosalynde Welch. She has a chapter where she explores this, how that's one reason that Moroni shares the story of the brother of Jared because she's using him as a model for gentiles. How can you be saved when you're outside the covenant line here? And it's through the brother of Jared's exceedingly great faith. Even before he knew the name of Jesus Christ, he exercised such great faith that that veil parted. And Moroni uses that story and then speaks to modern gentiles, "This is how you do it." So the Jaredites are both a cautionary tale, gentiles, if you don't repent, you could be

destroyed too, but also a model of what to do using the brother of Jared as this example that faith is the key to coming under Jesus no matter what your family background and covenant status is. So I think the centurion here in the Gospel of Matthew is playing a similar role. There's different gentiles highlighted in the Gospel of Matthew to show these examples of how can gentiles approach the son of God and it's through the faith that they exercise in him.

- Hank Smith: 24:19 I'm writing this down in my Book of Ether. Yeah, the brother of Jared is a gentile believer. Moroni is using him as a model. And we can use this centurion the same way.
- John Bytheway: 24:27 The centurion is a gentile.
- Hank Smith: 24:28 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 24:30 And I like the way he said that, "They'll come from the east and the west, they'll come from all over, they'll sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, children of the kingdom cast into outer darkness."
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 24:40 And notice who Jesus is saying this to. It says he's speaking to those that follow him, so fellow Jews, trying to make this clear. And remember, one of the reasons the centurion might have been hesitant to let Jesus come under his roof is because he knew the sensitivity of a lot of Jews where they thought it's inappropriate to go in the house of a gentile. So Jesus might be doing a little bit of a rebuke to that attitude. Again, this plays into how would we understand the love of God? There were many of these people in the covenant who felt God loves us but doesn't love people that are not in our group. So they had these traditions and expectations and Jesus has a sharp rebuke to those people here in the attitude. And again, it goes back to what the apostles recently said in the Restoration Proclamation, "We solemnly proclaim that God loves his children in every nation of the world." Anytime we start saying God doesn't love these people or limiting that, we're getting into a little bit of trouble.
- Hank Smith: 25:37 So God loves faith more than he loves what your family history is.
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 25:42 Not that the family history is not important, but these people should be on their front lines welcoming Jesus. But instead, you have this guy exercising greater faith than they did. That's why Jesus marvels despite all the advantages these people have with

the Old Testament and the covenant history, they should be the first in line to recognize the Messiah and proclaim him to the world, it's this outsider who's coming and seeing it faster than they are.

- Hank Smith: 26:06 That's a great takeaway from this story. God loves, and when we start to limit God's love, we're getting into trouble.
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 26:13 So then Verse 13 wraps up the story. "And Jesus said unto the centurion, go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so shall it be unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." So we get what the centurion was looking for. He had that confidence, that trust in Jesus and he was able to find that.
- Hank Smith: 26:32 I wanted to read something from an old commentary called Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary says this, "Centurion was a Roman soldier. Though he was a soldier, yet he was a godly man. No man's calling or place will be an excuse for unbelief in sin. See how he states his servant's case, we should concern ourselves for the souls of our children and servants who are spiritually sick, who feel not spiritual evils, who know not that which is spiritually good and we should bring them to Christ by faith and prayers, observe his self-abasement, humble souls are made more humble by Christ's gracious dealings with them. Observe his great faith, the more definite we are of ourselves, the stronger will be our confidence in Christ." He goes on to say more about this centurion, but I love that. "Observe his self-abasement, humble souls are made more humble by Christ's gracious dealings with them."
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 27:28 So that's the end of the story of the centurion's son. And Matthew goes on from there. But in Luke, it continues into a related story that comes after, and you only find it in Luke here. And so we're going to jump now to Luke Chapter 7 and pick up in Verse 11, which is right after the centurion story in Luke's version.
- Hank Smith: 27:48 And this is a story that you don't get in Matthew.
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 27:50 Yeah, this is unique to Luke. And Luke often has in his gospel what are called Luke in Doublets, he likes to put pairs of stories that are related to each other and go back to back so that you can compare and contrast the stories. This is an example of that. You have to read the story of the centurion servant back to back with the story that follows here in Luke Chapter 7, Verse 11. In Verse 11, it says, "And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the

gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her." And what Luke highlights here is that she's a widow and she just lost her only child and he's really highlighting the plight of this woman.

28:44 So she has no husband to care and provide for her and now she's lost her son who presumably was going to be her economic support with the loss of her husband. So now not only does she have the tragedy of losing a family member, but she's going to be in quite a plight here. So she's just in a devastating situation. And then in Verse 13, "When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, weep not. And he came and touched the bier," that's the wooden thing that they would've been carrying the body on, "And they that bear him stood still." So he stops the procession here, it's probably quite dramatic and maybe unexpected for these people. "And he said, young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us, and, that God hath visited his people."

29:43 And this is a wonderful story and it's especially significant again when you contrast it with the story that Luke has placed right before about the centurion servant, because again, these little doublets that Luke does, he wants you to compare and contrast. So think about how much these two stories are complete opposites of each other. You've got the centurion is a man and the widow is a woman. The centurion is a Roman and the woman is Jewish. The centurion is rich, the woman is poor, and we've sought bad economic circumstances. He came to Jesus with faith and expressed request for help, whereas she had no idea who Jesus was and Jesus came to her without being asked. His servant was only dying, but her son is already dead. There's all sorts of ways in which you can see a huge contrast between these I think Luke has paired them because they're very much opposites in almost every way you can think about.

30:40 I think there's an important lesson there, if you just had one healing story, you might be tempted to think, "Well God loves people in this kind of a situation, or God is going to respond in these circumstances." But by showing the complete opposite, it breaks that down. God doesn't just love him because he's a man or he's rich or he came with this humble request, God is willing to heal and help us in all the opposite situations as well. So it encourages again to see God's love as being inclusive and for a variety of circumstances and that it doesn't have to be just one

way in the way in which we approach Jesus and seek that healing.

- Hank Smith: 31:22 Yeah. One of our colleagues, Keith Wilson, gave a talk on this very miracle in a BYU devotional called *BYU Matter To Him*. He says, "The sequence of events is very important. Capernaum is situated on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, 600 feet below sea level. Nain is about 30 miles away from Capernaum at 700 feet above sea level, thus requiring an arduous uphill climb of more than 1,300 feet to get to Nain. In order to walk from Capernaum to Nain, it would take him at least one or two days." He says, "Recently, it took a group of BYU Jerusalem students nearly 10 hours to walk this route. This means that Jesus probably had to walk during the night in order to intercept this barrow procession the day after." And he goes on and he talks about this story and he says, "Naturally, the crowd of villagers and Jesus' followers were awestruck as their grief turned to shared joy."
- 32:15 "But this miracle was not just about impressing a community, it was all about rescuing one desperate soul. Jesus was aware that something was very wrong for this woman, someone who was a true nobody in her culture. Her situation cried out for his immediate attention, even if he had to skip a night's rest, he knew her desperate situation and he came running." And President Monson spoke undeniably of this truth when he said, "One day when we look back at the seemingly coincidences of our lives, we will realize they were perhaps not so coincidental at all." In this section for the widow of Nain, he finishes, "I hope this woman's experience will be a great comfort to each of you, especially when you feel rather insignificant. Jesus hurried to the widow and he will hurry to you as well."
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 33:03 Yeah, I appreciate that because yeah, the fact that Jesus had to hasten uphill rapidly to get there just shows how much he wanted to be there to help her out. I had an experience on my mission where, as missionaries do, we had goals that we weren't quite hitting on a certain week. And we sat down one night and we thought, "We've got to increase the number of new investigators or contacts that we followed up on," things like that. We had a goal for the week we need to get done. So we had our nightly planning meeting and we decided to try to contact all the people we'd met on the street that had said we could come back sometime and we'd try to find them. We sat down, we spent a good 45 minutes I think with this map and getting all these addresses and names we had and making a little map. Here we are and here's where we need to end up

and we'll hit all these places in this route on the way. We had it all set.

33:51 And the next day after lunch, we set out to do this and the vast majority of them were fake addresses, which was discouraging, or not right now or whatever, we didn't get into any doors. We spent a long time knocking all the list. We knocked the last house thinking it's now or never, and nothing, no answer. So we were going somewhere else and we were walking past the house next to the last one that we had just knocked and the door burst open. And this woman came running out sobbing saying, "[foreign language 00:34:24]. Elders, Elders, my father's dead. My father's dead." And we went in with her and she was just a mess. She was crying and took her a while to really explain what was going on. And when she was able to discuss, it turned out she was a member who hadn't been in church in many years and she had just gotten a phone call saying that her father had unexpectedly died.

34:48 And in shock she put the phone back on the receiver and she turned around just in this daze and straight out the window saw us walking right in front of her house. And she remembered the missionaries from years ago and so without thinking another thought, she just ran outside to go get us. She needed help. I was thinking about that later that night while writing in my journal, and one thing this taught me was the interesting thing about revelation, that we didn't really feel it was this dramatic revelatory experience in our planning meeting, there was no light from heaven coming down and felt like it was filling us with inspiration. But you think about the coincidence of the timing there, that there's about a five-second window maybe at most, if that, where we had to be right in front of her house when she was turning around looking out the window.

35:35 If we'd been 10 seconds ahead, 10 seconds behind, we would've missed her completely. So I realized inspiration had come the night before to plot things exactly as we have so it'd be in the right place at the right time, and that's how revelation goes. You usually don't recognize in the moment that it's revelation, but you're trying to do what God wants and he guides you. But the other big thing I took from that again was just what love does Heavenly Father have to have for this daughter of his, even though she hasn't come to church in years and probably wasn't living the gospel as fully as she could have, but he knew that she would be hurting and that she needed help and that he happened to have a couple servants in the area who had nothing better to do that afternoon, and he made sure that they were there in the right place and time to offer her comfort.

36:16 And we had a wonderful discussion. We read from Abinadi's testimony of the resurrection. She came to church that Sunday, but we were there when we needed to be because Heavenly Father loved her regardless of what else was going on in her life and he wanted to give her that comfort. When Jesus walks to Nain to be there for that funeral, that reminds me of that, just these tender mercies we get where we recognize he really does know about our individual situations. We're all significant to him.

Hank Smith: 36:43 Yeah, what a perfect complement to that story. Yeah, that's beautiful.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 36:47 With that, I'm wondering if we can jump now to the stilling of the storm. Look at that story.

Hank Smith: 36:52 Should we stay in Luke? Where do you want to go with this one?

Dr. Joshua Sears: 36:55 Well it's found in Mark, Matthew and Luke, but our reading this week in the manuals just has Mark and Matthew chapters, so we'll do those. We'll start with Mark.

Hank Smith: 37:05 Okay.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 37:06 So this is Mark Chapter 4 starting in Verse 35. The thing to first recognize about this story is that most of Mark Chapter 4 has been a collection of parables up to this point. And Jesus' parables sound really familiar and comforting to us because we've all accepted them for 2,000 years, but when he told them, they were often very controversial and provocative. I think that plays a role in why we have the miracle of the stilling of the storm right after this. Verse 35 goes through some pains editorially to link these together here because look at Verse 35. And the same day, meaning the same day after he just taught all these parables, then you get the stilling of the storm story. So Mark wants you to imagine these, he's teaching a bunch of parables and then we get the stilling of the storm.

37:51 And this shows Jesus' power over the physical elements and that divine authority he has as if to say, "This guy doesn't just talk the talk, he can walk the walk. He's got authority behind these words to back it up as manifests now by this very physical miracle that he's going to perform." So that's some setup there of maybe why Mark has this placed where he does. So Verse 35. "And the same day, when the even," or the evening," was come, he saith unto them, let us pass over unto the other side,"

meaning the other side of the Sea of Galilee. So they get in the boat. Verse 36. "When they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow."

38:46 And we can just stop there. I think this is always remarkable to people. This is a ship where everyone thinks they're going to die and yet he's asleep. Elder Holland actually had some comments on this in a talk he gave to the LDS family services employees a few years ago, and this was in the Ensign, the June 2018 Ensign, they reprinted this. And Elder Holland says this, "For those of you who earnestly seek to bear one another's burdens, it is important that you refortify yourself and build yourself back up when others expect so much of you and indeed take so much out of you. No one is so strong that they do not ever feel fatigued or frustrated or recognize the need to care for themselves. Jesus certainly experienced that fatigue, felt the drain on his strength. He gave and gave, but there was a cost attached to that and he felt the effects of so many relying on him."

39:37 "I've always been amazed," this is still Elder Holland, "That he could sleep through a storm on the Sea of Galilee, so serious and severe that his experienced fisherman disciples thought the ship was going down. How tired is that? How many sermons can you give and blessings can you administer without being absolutely exhausted? The caregivers have to have care too. You have to have fuel in the tank before you can give it to others." And he goes on to counsel things, seek balance, get enough sleep and all those things too, recognizing if Jesus is not immune to this fatigue of giving and caring for others, you're not either. Please take care of yourselves.

Hank Smith: 40:15 Well you can't take water from an empty well. You've got to replenish the well.

John Bytheway: 40:19 It's the run faster than you have strength idea in the Book of Mormon too that do what you can do, but you don't have to do more than you can do. Do you know what this reminds me of? Have you ever heard the story of the kid that was applying to work as a farm hand and he told the potential employer, "I can sleep when the wind blows," does that ring a bell to you?

Hank Smith: 40:39 No, tell it.

John Bytheway:

40:39

That story? It's so good. What happened was a big storm comes in the farm, are the horses locked up? Are the cows where they're supposed to be? Are the animals where they're supposed to be? And this kid by saying, "I can sleep when the wind blows," what he meant was he would prepare for storms and he was ready so that when the storm came and the farmer came out to see if everything was secure, it was already secured. And that's what he meant by, "I can sleep when the wind blows," because he was prepared for all those eventualities. And I thought about Jesus in this same story, why are you so fearful in Verse 40? Because he's prepared for all of that and wasn't worried and he cares for them. So he knew he could sleep through this and it'd be okay, but they woke him up.

Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Dr. Joshua Sears. Matthew 8, Mark 2 through 4, and Luke 7.
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 00:08 So, then continuing in verse 38, "And, they awake him and say unto him, 'Master, carest thou not that we perish?' And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, 'Peace, be still.' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm and he said unto them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?' And they feared exceedingly and said one to another, 'What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?'" Now there's a lot to unpack here. This story is just so rich. One reason that Jesus has this piercing question to them is because as they recognize who he is, they should have been a little more aware that there was no real danger. We can look, for example, I'm going to go back to the Book of Psalms, just bring bringing some Old Testament again here.
- 01:03 Psalm 46, the first three verses says this, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." As you trust in God, the Psalm is at least presenting this ideal that then you shouldn't be afraid if the waters are rolling at you. And, there's another Psalm that goes over a sea storm as well at, it's Psalm 107, starting in verse 23. It tells the story about sailors caught out in a storm. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind which lifted up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heavens," meaning the waves, "They go down at the end, to the depths.
- 01:56 "Their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man and they are at their wit's end. Then they cry into the Lord in their trouble and he bringeth them out of their darkness. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." You can hear the echoes of this in the story of Jesus. The story might be crafted to actually echo

the Psalm here, but then the ending is different, which is why they get rebuked. Verse 30 in Psalm 107, "Then are they glad because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men, let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people and praise him in the assembly of the elders."

02:43 So in the story, the sailors, the calm comes and they praise God and they recognize how wonderful he is, and apparently the apostles are not quite following that template here. So Jesus is like, "Come on, guys."

Hank Smith: 02:56 Pick up on Psalm 107.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 02:58 Yeah, why are you so fearful? Why have you no faith? Now in the apostles' defense, sometimes people give them a little harder time than maybe they deserve because in verse 40, Jesus asked, "Why are you fearful?" And then in verse 41 it says, "They feared exceedingly," like they're doing what Jesus just told them not to do. But again, in their defense, it's actually two different Greek words behind the words fearful there. So, they're not precisely doing what Jesus just said not to do. In verse 40, the word behind fearful is *deilos*, which can have a sense of cowardly in Greek.

03:31 So he's like, "Why are you being so cowardly?" It's kind of a negative thing. In verse 41 when it says they feareth exceedingly, it's a different word, it's *phobos*. We have our English word phobia from that. It means fear generically, but in the New Testament it'll also use that word for the kind of reverential fear that you have when you recognize the presence of divinity there, so it can be more positive. So he's like, "Stop being so cowardly." And, then it says that they have this kind of maybe more reverential, awestruck fear there in 41, leading to that question, what manner of man is this? They seem to not be fully still grasping the implications of who Jesus is, but maybe the gears are starting to turn and in some ways from a narrative point of view, if you're not them and you're stepping back, it should be obvious who Jesus is because in the Old Testament it's Jehovah who has power over the seas, who has control over the waters.

04:22 That's a very common presentation of him. Starting in Genesis chapter one, the spirit of God hovers over those primordial chaos waters there and then he brings creation and he's the one who parts the Red Sea and we just read the psalms where he's able to calm the storm. So frequently in the Old Testament, the

Israelites, they're not really seafarers all that much, out on the open ocean. They see waters as being symbols of chaos and death and destruction quite a bit. They looked at Jehovah for his control over the water. So when Jesus calms the storm, that should be a big hint about who this guy is and it's still a lot for them to take in. So they're marveling, "Wow, who is this?" Even the wind and the sea, that's even more amazing than the other elements because again, the waters are the hardest thing to control and that's divine activity right there.

05:09 But, the line here that sticks out to me through all of this is in verse 38 where they say, "Master, carest thou not that we perish? Some other ways you could translate this, "Don't you care?" Perish can also be translated as destroyed. So, "Don't you care that we're perishing? Don't you care that this is destroying us?" That kind of a sense there. What a human reaction.

Hank Smith: 05:34 Don't you care if we drowned?

Dr. Joshua Sears: 05:37 Don't you care I'm going through something hard? Even Joseph Smith expressed a similar sentiment in Liberty Jail, section 121, "Oh God, where art thou? Where's the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place? How long?" And, it goes on from there. This is such a common reaction. We all have times in our lives where we're going through something excruciating and we think, "Does God even care?" The word that the Lord responds with to Joseph in section 121, he says, "My son," and then what's the first thing he says? Peace.

06:08 It says the same thing here in Mark 4, first thing he says when he gets up, peace. What we need when we feel like God doesn't care is peace, and the source of that peace is Jesus Christ. Here in the stilling of the storm, one of the most remarkable things, he doesn't pray and ask that the storm be stilled. He simply commands because he has that authority that the centurion recognized earlier. He can simply say the word and it will be done, and so many people in these storms of life have really learned this lesson that the only way you're going to truly find peace is by looking to Jesus Christ, who's the only one who ultimately has power to calm those storms. I thought I'd share one story about a woman who experienced this. Her name is Mary Ann Baker. She was an American woman who lived in the second half of the 19th century and she's got a very remarkable story.

07:01 She was raised Christian, had a lot of faith, but a really hard life. When she was young, her parents died of tuberculosis, both of

them, leaving her an orphan, but she was left with her brother and sister. So, together they took care of each other, but years later, her brother also contracted tuberculosis and he was going to die. And so, the sisters pulled together all the money and the resources they could spare and they sent him to the southern United States. They lived in Chicago and they were hoping that the warmer weather would be good for him and help his recovery.

- Hank Smith: 07:32 They sent him to Florida, right?
- Dr. Joshua Sears: 07:34 Yeah, I think Florida, which is where I want to be now in the middle of the Utah winter. So, he gets there and just a few weeks later he dies too. And to just make this even worse, they'd already spent all their money just getting him there, so they didn't have any funds left to either travel there for a funeral or to bring his body home.
- 07:55 And, Mary-Ann describes how this just devastated her and she went to a real dark place and she recorded... This is her words now, "God does not care for me or mine." That's the conclusion that she came to, God doesn't care, and over the years she was able to move through this. She had spiritual experiences. She describes God reaching out to her and she was able to regain that faith and that trust in the love of God. And in 1874, she wrote a poem, very autobiographical poem to describe this journey that she went on, thinking God doesn't care to where she was able to regain her faith and she based it off this story here in the Gospels and you know the poem, I'll read it here.
- 08:39 "Master, the tempest is raging. The billows are tossing high. The sky is overshadowed with blackness. No shelter or help is nigh. Carest thou not that we perish? How canst thou lie asleep when each moment so madly is threatening a grave in the angry deep? Master, with anguish of spirit, I bow in my grief today. The depths of my sad heart are troubled. Awaken and save, I pray. Torrents of sin and of anguish sweep over my sinking soul and I perish. I perish, dear master. Oh hasten and take control. The winds and the waves shall obey thy will. Peace, be still. Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea or demons or man or whatever it be, no waters can swallow the ship where lies the master of ocean and earth and skies. They all shall sweetly obey thy will. Peace, be still. Peace, be still. They all shall sweetly obey thy will. Peace, peace be still.
- 09:55 "Master, the terror is over. The elements sweetly rest. Earth's sun in the calm lake is mirrored and heavens within my breast. Linger hope, oh blessed redeemer. Leave me alone no more and

with joy I shall make the blessed harbor and rest on the blissful shore." I think we've all heard that hymn before, but I think when you know her story, you appreciate how real that was and I think when we've been there and we know what she's been through, we all appreciate the desperation in those first two verses as we desperately call on God and we openly wonder, don't you care? How could you care and let this happen? Those are when it's really hard.

John Bytheway: 10:45

I love when we hear back stories of some of our hymns, that that came from such a hard, difficult thing and then to have this answer. We've sung the hymn for years, I didn't know that backstory. What a beautiful gift to the world has come from her experience in writing that poem you read so beautifully just now.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 11:08

We had a conference talk on this story just a couple of years ago, Lisa L. Harkness, she was a counselor in the primary general presidency. So her talk, Peace, Be Still, she comments on this and says, "In times of turmoil, our faith can feel stretched to the limits of our endurance and understanding. Waves of fear can distract us, causing us to forget God's goodness." That's what we've been talking about. "We forget God's goodness, thus leaving our perspective shortsighted and out of focus." She says, "Regardless of our circumstances, we can intentionally make efforts to build and increase our faith in Jesus Christ. It is strengthened when we remember..." And, then she lists two things which will sound familiar, we've been talking about it this whole day, "Our faith is strengthened when we remember that we are children of God and that he loves us. Our faith grows when we experiment on the word of God with hope and diligence, trying our very best to follow Christ's teachings. Our faith increases as we choose to believe rather than doubt.

12:17

"Forgive rather than judge. Repent rather than rebel. Our faith is strengthened as we patiently rely on the merits and mercy and grace of the holy Messiah." So, I thought that was interesting how she highlighted that again. As you do all these things first, above all else, you've got to remember that we're children of God, he loves us. Remember God's goodness. If you don't keep those things foundational and at the front of your mind, then the terrible things we go through and the suffering we experience is going to overwhelm us because nothing will make sense. It will seem like he's punishing us or like the suffering serves no purpose or like he doesn't care, all these other things that we're not going to understand unless we cement ourselves on those foundational truths.

Hank Smith: 13:02 John, I was able to find the story that you were talking about, It is Well With My Soul. This was written by Lloyd Newell, our friend. He said, "Life can be so unpredictable, joys and sorrows, beautiful blessings and distressing difficulties can come unexpectedly. Our life's dreams and plans can change in an instant. How can we find peace amid such turbulence? Horatio Spafford knew something about life's unexpected challenges. He was a successful attorney and real estate investor who lost a fortune in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Around the same time, his beloved four-year-old son died of scarlet fever. Thinking a vacation would do his family some good, he sent his wife and four daughters on a ship to England, planning to join them after he finished pressing business at home. However, while crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship was involved in a terrible collision and sunk. More than 200 people lost their lives, including all four of Horatio Spafford's precious daughters.

14:00 "His wife Anna, surviving the tragedy, arrived in England, sent a telegram to her husband that began, 'Saved alone. What shall I do?' Horatio immediately set sail for England. At one point during his voyage, the captain of the ship, aware of the tragedy that had struck the family, summoned Horatio to tell him they were now passing over the spot where the shipwreck had occurred. As Horatio thought about his daughters, words of comfort and hope filled his heart and mind. He wrote them down and they have become a well-loved hymn. 'When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to know it is well, it is well with my soul.' Perhaps we cannot say that everything is well in all aspects of our lives. There will always be storms to face and sometimes there will be tragedies, but with faith in a loving God and with trust in his divine help, we can confidently say it is well, it is well with my soul." Is that what you were thinking of?

John Bytheway: 15:05 At a Tabernacle Choir Christmas concert years ago, they had Hugh Bonneville be the guest and he narrated and told the backstory of that hymn, just incredible, and of course, the choir sang the hymn and it's amazing that people knowing that God is real and he loves them can get to that place, even a tragedy, and be able to say it is well with my soul or peace, be still as you taught us, Josh, but it's so easy to say God's real, he loves us, but sometimes you're backed up against the wall of faith. Does he really? And these couple of stories, it sounds like people got backed up against the wall and had to... Does he really or doesn't he? And, they thankfully came to that conclusion. He is real and he loves us and we have beautiful hymns because of a tragedy like that. That's amazing.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 15:57 And, maybe it's not a coincidence that so many of our favorite hymns, the ones that are so meaningful, come from people who have a backstory in real suffering because something about that produces these poems, these wonderful explorations of our human condition. In fact, maybe we can just do one more. I think we're on a roll with these, to explore.

Hank Smith: 16:19 President Howard W. Hunter said, "All of us have seen some sudden storms in our lives. A few of them, though temporary, like these on the Sea of Galilee can be violent and frightening and potentially destructive. As individuals, as families, communities, nations, even as a church, we have had sudden squalls arise which have made us ask one way or another, master, carest thou not that we perish? In one way or another, we always hear in the stillness of the storm, why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? None of us would like to think we have no faith, but I suppose the Lord's gentle rebuke here is largely deserved. The great Jehovah, in whom we say we trust and whose name we have taken upon us, is he who said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters. Let it divide the waters from the waters.'"

17:06 And he is also the one who said, 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place and let the dry land appear.' Furthermore, it was he who parted the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to pass through on dry ground. Certainly, it should be no surprise that he could command a few elements acting up on the Sea of Galilee and our faith should remind us that he can calm the troubled waters of our lives." He goes on to tell the story of Mary Ann Baker that Josh told us in this talk. It's called Master, The Tempest Is Raging by Elder Howard W. Hunter way back in the 1980s. Do you remember those?

John Bytheway: 17:38 Yeah, October Conference 1984. It's a good one to look up. There is in the Come, Follow Me manual for individuals and families, it's a great little activity here. It says, "Have you ever felt the way Jesus' disciples did in the storm at sea, watching the waves of water fill the boat and questioning, master, carest thou not that we perish?" In Mark 4, 35 through 41, you will find four questions. List each one, ponder what it teaches you about facing life's challenges with faith in Jesus Christ. How does the Savior bring peace to the storms of your life? And, it even mentions Sister Lisa L. Harkness' talk here after that, but that's a great idea because those questions we have had, but boy, the Savior's question I can't get over. Why are ye so fearful? When we read that, we think of almost every time an angel appears on earth, what is the first thing they say?

Hank Smith:	18:33	Yeah, it's always fear not.
John Bytheway:	18:35	Why are you so fearful all the time here on the planet? And, they've just come from this heavenly place and the first thing they always say, "Fear not." It's interesting.
Hank Smith:	18:45	That is interesting. I can see any of our listeners going through some major difficulties doing that activity, John, taking those four questions, it says, list them. Ponder what it teaches you about facing life's challenges. "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" From verse 38. From verse 40, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" And then verse 41, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?" What a therapeutic activity, I think, to go through those four questions in your mind and ponder each. Does he care? Why are you so fearful? It's okay to answer that, I think. It's okay to say, "Well, because of this." How is it that you have no faith? That's a hard one to answer. And then to think about, who is this that you're dealing with? Who is this Lord that even the wind and the sea obey him? How much faith can you place in a being like that?
John Bytheway:	19:41	And, I love these stories that are showing us that Jesus was more than just a moral teacher who had some really great quotations. All of these miracles show, oh no, this was much more than a moral teacher and he is the Creator, as those verses you read in the Old Testament show us. He has power over all of these elements and people and plants and male and female and animals and all of those things demonstrating that he's the creator and he can recreate and heal and everything, so fun to see those messages in there.
Dr. Joshua Sears:	20:18	But, when you're wet and stormy and about to sink, it is so hard-
John Bytheway:	20:21	When you're in the middle of it, yeah.
Dr. Joshua Sears:	20:22	Keep what you know in your heart there. A lot of people listening, they've probably experienced, either them or family members, one specific trial that's prevalent today. Mental illness is one that's especially hard and devastating of all storms you could face. There's particular difficulties when you're facing that. Unlike some other forms of injury or illness, mental illness doesn't show on the outside. You're not wearing a cast, you're not going through chemo. It can be invisible in that sense. There can still be a stigma around treatment for those things. Another difficulty is often people experiencing mental illness have difficulty feeling the spirit or feeling God's love, which makes it

even harder to recognize that through the midst of what they're going through, but things like depression, anxiety, bipolar, anorexia, all sorts of other things are hurting so many families. I've got family members, friends, students, lots of people in my ward and elsewhere, I know where this is a particular struggle.

21:25 And, I think there's a message here in the Gospels here for people going through this in particular and we've gone over some histories of hymns today. So, here's one more we can add to that. The story of another woman, Emma Lou Thayne, she's a Latter-day Saint from now the second half of the 20th century. This is her story, so I'm getting this from a church news article that she wrote from 2001 where she recalled what was going on in her life. She says, "That spring of 1970 had not been a happy time. The oldest of our five daughters was, at 19, struggling with what we'd never heard of, manic depression/bipolar disease, bulimia and anorexia. The beautiful girl who had grown up enjoying school, friends, boyfriends, swimming, and water skiing had been obsessed with dieting. And when the boy she sent on a mission didn't write, she fell into a depression unlike anything we could comprehend. Then away at college, she became manic and had to come home to be hospitalized. When could she return to herself, to her promising life? Those three years were the bleakest time I have ever known."

22:36 And, then she describes how she sat down to write a poem to explore all the thoughts that she had gone through. She knew, like you learn in the stilling of the storm, that the only way to truly find peace is through the Savior Jesus Christ, no matter what waves and storms life is tossing at you. So, she wrote this poem which we're all familiar with, "Where can I turn for peace? Where is my solace when other sources cease to make me whole? When, with a wounded heart, anger or malice, I draw myself apart, searching my soul? Where when my aching grows? Where when I languish? Where in my need to know? Where can I run?"

23:28 "Where is the quiet hand to calm my anguish? Who can understand? He, only one. He answers privately, reaches my reaching. In my Gethsemane, Savior and friend, gentle the peace he finds for my beseeching. Constant he is and kind, love without end." So, we know that hymn and she had a friend who was musically inclined, a composer named Jolene, and so she called her friend and said, "I wrote this poem, can you set it to music?" She would read her friend a line over the phone and her friend on the piano would work out the tune, and over the course of a morning they worked out this hymn.

Hank Smith:	24:20	Wow.
Dr. Joshua Sears:	24:22	She says, "Jolene herself had a history of genetic depression in her family, so she understood every word I'd written." And, then Emma Lou Thayne concludes, "We sought professional help for Becky and found it in a superb doctor and a newly found medicine that corrected her chemical imbalance. She would need it the rest of her life, but it was love from her future husband and the peace expressed in that hymn that provided the ultimate healing for Becky."
	24:50	A few years ago, Deseret Book came out with this book Silent Souls Weeping. It's by Jane Clayson Johnson and is about depression, and in here she went to interview the composer, Jolene. She asked her about her experience composing the music for this hymn and what that meant for them. So, here's a different take on that process there. "Jolene told me that she and Emma Lou had called that song the Mental health Hymn." That was the kind of their original title, "And, that the Gethsemane they were both thinking of as they wrote it included the mental suffering and anguish that the Savior took upon himself for each individual who has or will suffer from depression and other mental illnesses. She told me about a mental health episode of her own. It was so severe, she recalled, that she was unable to get out of bed for months. When she was finally able to leave her room and go downstairs, she joked that she and her family celebrated by getting in the car and driving around the block.
	25:46	"I love visiting with Jolene because she made it easy to talk about mental illness. She spoke with candor and even a little bit of humor. She wishes that mental health issues were as easy to spot as physical issues. 'Too bad you can't wear a cast on your head,' she laughed, 'Because something is broken in there and that's really hard for people to understand.' Then and now, Jolene believes that peace can be found even when trapped in the Gethsemane of depression, even when the Lord does not heal us like he did the blind man."
Hank Smith:	26:18	Goodness.
Dr. Joshua Sears:	26:22	This is so rough, but this is where we do have to understand we absolutely have to seek out medication, therapy, professional help, all those things, but ultimately the only way we're going to make it through this particular storm is by faith in the Son of God. He can heal us and it's hard when we have to wait for that healing to come, but the peace he promises is very much real.

Hank Smith:	26:49	Wow, that was really beautiful, Josh. Thank you for that, goodness.
John Bytheway:	26:54	Isn't that interesting that three different hymns now we've talked about that have come from some very difficult circumstances. What are the three hymns we've talked about?
Hank Smith:	27:05	It Is Well With My Soul, Master, The Tempest Is Raging, and Where Can I Turn for Peace.
John Bytheway:	27:10	That it wasn't just, "I think I'll write a song today." It was, "I am trying to understand, working through my own faith and these words came out of them." That's amazing, and it makes me want to research the other ones and see some of the backstories because those are powerful. I'm glad you brought those up, Josh. Thank you.
Dr. Joshua Sears:	27:33	There is a book Deseret Book sells, Our Latter-day Hymns and it gives the stories for all of them. It's a good one.
Hank Smith:	27:38	This is a quote from President Thomas S. Monson. He says, "I testify to you that our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments." He seems so positive. Listen to this, "There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us. My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not, be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith."
John Bytheway:	28:11	Do you remember the book, Our Search for Happiness, that Elder Ballard, now President M. Russell Ballard wrote? He had a line in there about it's hard to have a negative attitude about anything when your life is focused on Christ. There's this eventual hope, this eventually things will come out right because we know he's there and we know he loves us. And as you said, Josh, but when you're in the middle of it, this is the hard part. And, sometimes all you have to hang on to is that, I know he is there and I know he loves us. I don't understand this, but maybe someday I will and someday there will come healing and peace and in the middle of it is the hardest place I suppose.
Hank Smith:	28:56	That was just so good. I don't want to stop, but okay, what's our next part?

Dr. Joshua Sears: 29:02 We'll move on to another scripture block, but we're not done with the stilling of the storm. I thought we'd conclude today by looking at how Matthew tells the story of the stilling of the storm. It's the same story. We're going to have much the same meaning, but he gives a twist on it that's going to add another dimension to this.

Hank Smith: 29:16 Are we back in Matthew 8?

Dr. Joshua Sears: 29:18 We're back in Matthew 8. We're going to start at verse 18, and here's one reason that's worth repeating this story in a different Gospel. Many years ago I was a student of Gaye Strathearn in her classes, I know you've had her here on the podcast, and she taught me an important idea about the Gospels. We've got repetition of different stories in different Gospels. You get this sense of déjà vu, like, "I feel like I have read this story before quite recently," and what she taught me was you've got to pay attention to the story in each Gospel. Don't just get the déjà vu feeling and say, "Oh, I read this, I'm going to skip it this time. I've already covered this," because not only do the different stories in different Gospels contain different details where you get one detail in one but not in another, but different Gospel authors might be using the same story to teach different lessons, depending on what details they've included and how they frame it and set it up."

30:15 The stilling of the storm was actually the example that she used in class to teach us about this. So in Matthew chapter eight, he's got the stilling of the storm, but he's trying to get you to get a slightly different lesson out of it this time. And, you can get a sense of that by looking at what story does he tell right before the stilling of the storm, which is different than how Mark sets it up. Remember, in Mark he had all the parables and then emphasized the same day, we're going to get in the boat here, and so we're now showing Jesus' authority to back up all the words he just spoke. So, it shows Jesus's power over the physical elements and we explore, who is this guy? Matthew 8 is a different setup. So, let's read verses 18 to 22. This is Matthew 8 now.

30:54 "When Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart under the other side and a certain scribe came and said unto him, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.' And Jesus sayeth unto him, 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man have not where to lay his head.'" In other words, he's saying, "You want to follow me? Great. Have you thought this through though? I'm homeless." Following him in that literal

sense back then meant you're wandering the countryside and you're not going to have a home. "A fox and a bird will have more of a home than you do. They have a place to go stay and rest, but I sleep on the ground, I'm out in the rain." So, he's asking him to weigh the cost of this before he jumps into it.

31:40 And then in verse 21, you get another account that teaches the same thing, "And another of his disciples said unto him, 'Oh Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.' But Jesus said unto him, 'Follow me and let the dead bury their dead.'" We don't want to over-read this. Jesus isn't prohibiting funerals. This isn't a general principle, but he's saying, "You know what, the issue here is, are you going to follow me and are you willing to put me first?" It's about the cost of discipleship right here. So, in each case the message is ultimately the same. If you're going to follow me, be sure you're going to follow me. You can't do this half-heartedly. You need to be all in. You need to be invested. And, then verse 23 is now the story of the stilling of the storm. But Matthew has a different beginning to the story.

32:26 It links it to these other stories. Look at verse 23, when he was entered into a ship, his disciples did what? Followed him. So follow, follow, follow, that is the repeated refrain here. So, this is linking the stilling of the storm now to the issue of following that we've just gone over with the foxes and the dead father. And, Matthew has crafted this carefully. Most scholars think that Mark is written first and that Matthew's making some kind of revision to Mark, so we'll go with that. Notice in the Mark version, in verse 36 of Mark 4, the disciples get in the ship first and they take Jesus with him. He follows them. Matthew has very deliberately switched it, so now Jesus goes in the ship first and they follow him onto the ship because he's trying to stress this idea of following Jesus. So, we've tweaked that detail of the story in a way that brings out that lesson very powerfully.

33:16 So, they follow him into the ship, and then in verse 24, "Behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea and so much that the ship was covered with the waves, but he was asleep." And, Matthew has changed a word here too. So in Mark, the word was storm, Greek was *lailaps* right there, and it's just a storm, but Matthew here has the word *seismos*, which was translated tempest. But in the New Testament, *seismos* is used for earthquakes, it's really big, and it's usually used when Jesus is giving the Olivet Discourse, like Matthew 24 talking about the end of the world, the stuff that's going to happen there. And, it's in the Book of Revelation talking about the end of the world. So, this word in the New Testament has this connotation of really big picture, thematic world-shattering stuff. So Matthew,

maybe here with that word is trying to suggest... It's a storm, but let's think bigger than a storm.

34:07 There's bigger implications to this for your discipleship. His disciples come to him and they say... And notice instead of master, here they call him Lord. That's a difference. They're recognizing something else here. And instead of, carest thou not that we perish, Matthew has them say, "Lord, save us, we perish." And, that word save in the New Testament can have an immediate physical meaning, but also can have deeper spiritual meaning. There's a lot more than just the storm they've got to be saved from. So, Matthew is making this much more cosmic and just thinking about bigger picture issues here than just the storm, and then that's highlighted too in the next little tweak that Matthew makes. He changes the order of what happens next. In Mark, Jesus gets up and he first calms the sea and then he discusses faith with them. So, that highlights the calming of the storm is kind of the climax of the story, that's the point.

35:01 But then in Matthew, he flips it, so that he asks them about their faith, why are you fearful oh ye of little faith, and then secondarily, he then calms the storm. So, the climax is now the discussion of faith rather than the storm, it highlights that instead. So, there's a bunch of little ways here in which Matthew has made some tweaks to the story, but he's trying to highlight some key themes. This is basically about discipleship. A lot of people have read the boat as a symbol for the church. He says, "Follow me." He walks into that boat and you have a choice. Do I get on the boat with him or not? Do I take off on this journey right here or not? And again, he said the question, foxes have holes, birds have nests, all these things. Weigh the cost of discipleship.

35:43 If you're going to follow me, this is a long-term ride and it's going to be stormy weather sometimes, which is really what this gets at. When you're in that boat, thinking of the boat symbolically as the church lets you do some different things with the story. For example, in Mark, he followed them on the boat and the storm pops up. But in Matthew, because he invited them onto the boat, that means now that they wouldn't be experiencing this storm except for the fact that they were following him. And, isn't it true that sometimes our very trials are the fact that we are trying to be faithful disciples, trying to be active in the church? That itself can bring some of our hard things that we go through. So being in the boat itself, had they not gone in the boat, they could be blissfully sleeping at some house in Capernaum and waking up in the middle of the night

and thinking, "Wow, there's a rumble out there. It must be a storm," and you just go back to bed.

36:32 But, now they're out there because they followed him. The boat itself causes some of the problems. If the church is the boat, think about this, you get in this boat and you get splinters. The boat is not constructed perfectly. Everybody's got to pitch in and help hoist the sails and rig whatever or things are not going to go well. You've got to work to be in the boat and don't get started on some of the other passengers in the boat. How many trials do we get because of the other passengers we're stuck with in this boat? But, most of them are decent people that are fine, but some of them are annoying or downright offensive, and some of our very trials can be with these people we're stuck with in the boat.

37:15 And when you're experiencing all that, the temptation can be, well, the boat got me into this mess and the boat is not protecting me from the storms, therefore maybe I should get out of the boat. Try that and see how that goes. And, one message you can take from the story in Matthew's version is that is not a good idea. The message is still stay in the boat, look to Jesus for the peace you need, but getting out of the boat is not a good idea, and modern apostles have picked up on this message. So for example, Elder Ballard, I remember a few years ago had a talk titled Stay in the Boat.

Hank Smith: 37:49 Stay on the Boat, yeah.

Dr. Joshua Sears: 37:50 And hold on, this is October 2014. He quotes President Brigham Young, had the same analogy. Brigham Young referred to the church as the old ship Zion and Brigham Young said, "We are in the midst of the ocean. A storm comes on and as sailors say, she labors very hard. 'I'm not going to stay here,' says one. 'I don't believe this is the ship Zion.' 'But we're in the midst of the ocean.' 'I don't care, I'm not going to stay here.' Off goes the coat and he jumps overboard. Will he not be drowned? Yes, so will be with those who leave this church. It is the old ship Zion, so let's stay in it."

38:24 This is very Brigham Young, right? I love the kind of humor here. So, Brigham Young has a bunch of quotes about that. This is the old ship Zion, God is at the helm, stay here. So then Elder Ballard picks this up and says, "Given the challenges we all face today, how do we stay in the old ship Zion?" And Elder Ballard says, "Here's how, we need to experience a continuing conversion by increasing our faith in Jesus Christ and our

faithfulness to his gospel throughout our lives. Not just once but regularly."

38:57 So Mark, we talked about exercising faith and looking to Jesus for peace, but Matthew has this added dimension that you don't just vote with your heart, you vote with your feet. Being close to Christ isn't just a matter of trusting him in your heart, it's being with him in that boat. It's staying true to not just him but his church and doing all you can to be faithful to his gospel, being where he is, even when being where he wants you to be means that you're going to end out in storms. This reminded me too of what Elder Holland said in the last general conference in October, "To be a follower of Jesus Christ, one must sometimes carry a burden, your own or someone else's, and go where sacrifice is required and suffering is inevitable." Isn't that a great illustration of what Matthew's trying to say?

39:44 You could stay on the shore, it's going to be nice, but sometimes getting in that boat means you're going to sail through the storms there, that's part of it. And Elder Holland continues, "A true Christian cannot follow the master only in those matters with which he or she agrees. No, we follow him everywhere, including if necessary, into arenas filled with tears and trouble where sometimes we may stand very much alone." So he reminds us there, there is a cost to discipleship and if we want to truly receive all the healing that Christ offers us, we need to not just do our best to trust in him, but to also keep his commandments, stay true to our covenants, and be loyal to the church of which he is the head.

40:27 And the hard thing about this is, again, just to wrap this all up, Luke and Matthew and everybody, when we're in the middle of these storms, it can be gut-wrenchingly difficult to recognize that Jesus cares and that he loves us, and to figure out, is this even where I should be standing right now? Is the boat the right place to be and to exercise that kind of faith? So, I want to kind of bring together to close here an article by Elder Bednar, Accepting the Lord's Will and Timing that's from the August 2016 Ensign. You're probably familiar with this. He discusses the case of a young couple who were married three weeks out of the temple when the husband, he's calling John was diagnosed with bone cancer. This young couple, he's a returned missionary, they had all these hopes and dreams for the future and just how that just comes crashing to a halt when you get that kind of a diagnosis and face something like that.

41:23 They had treatments, they had blessings, and I don't know how this happened, but Elder Bednar ended up visiting with this

couple in the hospital and they requested a priesthood blessing. And Elder Bednar says, "I then posed questions that I had not planned to ask and had never previously considered." So, he's inspired to ask them this question, "John, do you have the faith not to be healed? If it is the will of our Heavenly Father that you are transferred by death in your youth to the spirit world to continue your ministry, do you have the faith to submit to His will and not be healed?" And Elder Bednar continues in the article, "If God's will were for this good, young man to be healed and that blessing could be received only if this valiant couple first have the faith not to be healed. We recognize a principle that applies to every devoted disciple, strong faith in the Savior is submissively accepting of his will and timing in our lives even if the outcome is not what we hoped for or wanted."

42:26

Then Elder Bednar, he quotes here the journal entry of the wife after this conversation. He's calling her Heather. Heather wrote, this is her journal now, "This day was filled with mixed emotions for me. I was convinced that Elder Bednar would place his hands on John's head and completely heal him of the cancer. I knew that through the power of the priesthood he could be healed, and I wanted so bad for that to happen. After Elder Bednar taught us about the faith to not be healed, I was terrified. Up to that point, I had never come to grips with the fact that the Lord's plan might include losing my new husband. My faith was dependent upon the outcomes I wanted. In a matter of speaking, it was one-dimensional. Though terrifying at first, the thought of having the faith not to be healed ultimately freed me from worry. It allowed me to have complete trust that my Heavenly Father knew me better than I knew myself and he would do what was best for me and John."

43:27

In other words, Elder Bednar's counsel helped her get back to what we've been talking about, trusting that God is our father, he's good, he loves us, and therefore whatever he does, even if it's not what we want right now is what is best for us. So, he explains that the cancer went in remission for a while and then it came back and they had to face this all over again. And, he has a quote here from the husband as he's dealing with now the cancer coming back worse than before, so the husband says, "I began to pray for clarity and for the Lord to help me understand why this recurrence of the cancer was happening. One day as I was reading in the New Testament, I received my answer. I read the account of Christ and his apostles on the sea when the tempest arose. Fearing the boat would capsize, the disciples went to the Savior and asked, 'Master, carest thou not that we perish?' This is exactly how I felt. Carest thou not that I have cancer? Carest thou not that we want to start a family?"

- 44:29 But as I read on in the story, I found my answer. The Lord looked at them and said, 'Oh ye of little faith,' and he stretched forth his hand and calmed the waters. In that moment, I had to ask myself, do I really believe this? Do I really believe he calmed the waters that day or is it just a nice story to read about? The answer is, I do believe and because I know he calmed the waters, I instantly knew he could heal me. Up until this point, I had a hard time reconciling the need for my faith in Christ with the inevitability of his will. I saw them as two separate things and sometimes I felt that one contradicted the other. "Why should I have faith if his will is ultimately what will prevail?" I asked.
- 45:10 "After this experience, I knew that having faith, at least in my circumstance, was not necessarily knowing that he would heal me, but that he could heal me. I had to believe that he could, and then whether it happened was up to him. As I allowed these two ideas to coexist in my life, focused faith in Jesus Christ and complete submission to his will, I found greater comfort and peace. It has been so remarkable to see the Lord's hand in our lives. Things have fallen into place, miracles have happened, and we continually are humbled to see God's plan for us unfold."
- 45:46 So excuse the long quote, but I felt that that guy's journey was so instructive, and then Elder Bednar has this conclusion. He says, "Righteousness and faith certainly are instrumental in healing the sick, deaf, and lame if such healing accomplishes God's purposes and is in accordance with his will. Thus, even if we have strong faith, many mountains will not be moved and not all the sick and infirm will be healed. If all opposition were curtailed, if all maladies were removed, then the primary purposes of the father's plan would be frustrated. Many of the lessons we are to learn in mortality can be received only through the things we experience and sometimes suffer, and God expects and trusts us in the face of temporary mortal adversity with his help, so we can learn what we need to learn and ultimately become what we are to become in eternity."
- 46:37 That's the hardest stuff we have to deal with right there, isn't it? I've got someone who's very close to me who has suffered with depression and anxiety for many years now and we're still in the process of seeking the healing and help that we all who know and love him hope for him. And I've got to tell you guys, I've never in my life had what some people call a faith crisis. It's just in my bones that the gospel is true. It's just been an instinct for me and I've seen too many miracles and had too many spiritual experiences to ever doubt that. So, that's never been a

challenge for me, wondering if God exists or if he's there or anything like that, but the times in my life where maybe I've been most frustrated with God have been praying over this individual and his continued mental illness, where I've had a couple prayers over the years where I've just been so angry, wondering, how can this kind of suffering where he hurts so badly can't even feel the Holy Ghost?

47:33 What is this supposed to teach him? How could this possibly be part of the plan? What's going on here? Why is nothing we have tried helped? And, I've just been outright angry and I just let him know it. And, it's in those prayers I've never gotten answers on why is this happening or I don't know exactly how long it's going to take or what things are going to look like in the future, but the consistent response from Heavenly Father to me in those prayers, if I can share something personal, has just been to feel a reassurance that God knows him and loves him and he has even shared some of that love with me where I'll just be filled with it in the middle of my rant, in my prayer, just this incredible feeling of love. Heavenly Father giving me a taste of what he feels for this person.

48:21 And, I've almost wanted to get mad at that response being like, "How can you claim to love him when this is what he's going through? If you love him, why isn't this going differently?" But at that point, I can't muster up the frustration anymore because just the love is so palpable and overwhelming and wonderful and beautiful. So, I don't have all the answers for this situation, but one thing I have felt repeatedly is a sure knowledge that Heavenly Father is aware of this person, that Heavenly Father loves him perfectly, and that for whatever reason this is going on, it is for a reason and that everything is going to be okay. That's the answer I have gotten and that has still not solved all the pain that we go through and that still has not fixed the very real suffering that he and others who care for him have to go through here.

49:11 But, I do know that God is not messing with us. I do know that Heavenly Father cares and all of this suffering we go through is for a reason and that Heavenly Father has everything in his hands. I know we can trust Jesus Christ and look to him for the peace and calm that we need in these storms. Ultimately, every malady will be healed completely, all suffering will end and he's going to wipe away every tear off every face. And, that's what I look forward to in faith, knowing that we need to stand still and wait for the arm of the Lord to be revealed.

Hank Smith:	49:48	Be still and know that I am God. Thank you so much for this, Josh. This has been... What a perfect day.
John Bytheway:	49:58	I think that was a beautiful ending and I love, Josh, that we started with preach my gospel, God's real, he loves us, and you've brought that all full circle as a context for all of these storms and everything.
Hank Smith:	50:12	Josh, thank you so much for that ending and thank you for being with us today. These stories have come to life for me more than ever before, and some of the other stories that we found and shared the stories of the hymns. I hope our listeners are feeling the power that I felt today coming from all that you've prepared for us. So, absolutely wonderful day. We want to thank Dr. Josh Sears for being with us. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and of course, remember our founder, the late Steve Sorensen. We hope all of you will join us. We have another episode of followHIM coming up next week.
	50:56	Today's transcripts, show notes and additional references are available on our website, followhim.co , followhim.C-O . And, you can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on Facebook and Instagram. All of this is absolutely free, so be sure to share with your family and friends. To reach those who are searching for help with their Come Follow Me study, please subscribe, rate, review, or comment on the podcast, which makes the podcast easier to find, thank you. We have an amazing production crew we want you to know about, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilsen, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Cuadra. Thank you to our amazing production team.

WHY THE EMPHASIS ON PHYSICAL HEALING?



- Hank Smith: 00:04 Hello, everyone. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith, and I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. Welcome, John Bytheway.
- John Bytheway: 00:12 Thanks, Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:12 Glad that you're here. John, you know the drill, for followHIM Favorites, we're just going to take a look at a question from this week's lesson. And I'm actually going to get this question from the manual itself. It says right in the very beginning, "Why the emphasis on physical healings? And what messages might there be for one of us in these miracles?" Over and over and over, Jesus is healing lepers and Centurion's servants and Peter's mother-in-law, and daughters and sons. We are getting all these miraculous healing stories. What do you see in those messages for us?
- John Bytheway: 00:43 Yeah, that's a great question. I think one of them is just Jesus loved people, we see that, but it's also fun to make a list. He had power over men, over women, over death, over children, over animals, over nature.
- Hank Smith: 00:58 Jews and Gentiles.
- John Bytheway: 00:59 Yeah. This is a testimony of who he was. No moral teacher that we've ever heard of could do this. He not only taught great things, but look at the power he had. So it tells us who he was, that he was divine. And then, lastly, I think if he can do things in the physical world, he can heal us spiritually too, which is what we all want, is forgiveness of our sins. We feel spiritually wounded or sick or in some way not complete enough. And he can do that too. So I think all those things play into it and their testimony when we read it.
- Hank Smith: 01:33 Absolutely. I would say take each one of the miracles and go slow through them, because each one can have a different application. You've got Jesus healing a leper. And I wrote into my scriptures, "Are there anyone today that I treat like a leper, that I stay away from? What would the Savior do in those

examples?" When he heals the Centurion's servant, and oftentimes, the way we deal with people who aren't members of the church, the way we think about them, and here this Roman is not a Jew, and watch how Jesus deals with him. It seems over and over that the Savior is saying, "It was your faith that did this." Then we can ask ourselves, "What can I do to increase my faith?" The woman with the issue of blood, what a fantastic story of someone who takes initiative, tries to go get a healing from the Lord. And how can we do that better? So each one, I think, can teach us something. If we're slow and deliberate about it, we could find in each miracle story a principle of healing, not just another miracle.

- John Bytheway: 02:33 Excellent. And that just reminds me what you've just done, is like President Nelson. Learn to hear Him. Get on your knees and read it again and ask, "What can I learn from this?" And ask the Lord to help you as you read it.
- Hank Smith: 02:45 Beautiful.
- John Bytheway: 02:46 And you can look for things like that.
- Hank Smith: 02:48 Yeah. Well, we hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. And come back here next week for another Follow Him Favorites.