



*“Continue Ye in My Love”*

## **Show Notes & Transcripts**

### **Podcast General Description:**

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

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

### **Podcast Episode Descriptions:**

#### **Part 1:**

How does what Jesus teaches at the Last Supper that can help us through trials? Brother Robert Eaton explores how keeping covenants makes us free and how we consider how the Savior defines truth.

#### **Part 2:**

Brother Robert Eaton continues to examine the events surrounding the Last Supper and the relationship between love and commandments.

### **Timecodes:**

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Robert Eaton
- 00:46 Dr. Robert Eaton’s background
- 02:41 The Last Supper and Passover Feast
- 05:12 Context as a scripture study tool
- 09:50 Graduate seminar on discipleship
- 13:28 Seven statements
- 17:55 General Conference as a reference
- 21:47 Manner of Happiness
- 25:12 Truth sanctifies
- 27:21 Live the doctrine of Christ
- 29:34 The symbolism of life
- 31:47 Elder Gilbert the five prophetic emphases
- 35:02 Elder Holland on taking a moral stand
- 38:35 CS Lewis and \_The Silver Chair\_
- 42:24 Jesus is the only way
- 45:42 Latter-day Saints and Muslims
- 47:55 Jesus’s love language is obedience
- 50:38 Missionary Boggle
- 53:00 Consequences math
- 57:01 Ski boat analogy
- 1:01:00 The Holy Ghost and his mission
- 1:04:46 Trusting Jesus
- 1:10:33 End of Part 1–Dr. Robert Eaton

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Robert Eaton
- 00:07 Joy
- 02:17 Jesus as the Vine
- 04:26 The word merit
- 08:18 Teachers need to focus on Christ
- 11:15 The sacrament and its meaning
- 15:09 The love of friends
- 17:01 Getting out into nature
- 19:43 The Great Intercessory Prayer
- 23:35 Mission Leader’s Seminar
- 26:26 We need to know Jesus better
- 29:47 Pattern of prayer
- 33:44 City on a hill
- 37:23 Unity
- 38:58 Brother Robert Eaton’s journey as a scholar and disciple

- 44:02 End of Part II—Dr. Robert Eaton

## References:

Blue Letter Bible. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>.

Eaton, Robert, and Mark Beecher. “Becoming a Great Gospel Teacher: Bringing the Gospel Classroom to Life.” *Becoming a Great Gospel Teacher*. Accessed May 18, 2023. [https://deseretbook.com/p/becoming-great-gospel-teacher-robert-eaton-85400?ref=detailed-card-1&variant\\_id=10973-ebook](https://deseretbook.com/p/becoming-great-gospel-teacher-robert-eaton-85400?ref=detailed-card-1&variant_id=10973-ebook).

Eaton, Robert. “How to Keep Your Virtues From Becoming Vices.” *Extremes: How to keep your virtues from becoming vices - deseret book*. Accessed May 18, 2023. [https://deseretbook.com/p/extremes-how-keep-your-virtues-becoming-vices-robert-eaton-67710?ref=detailed-card-2&variant\\_id=32278-paperback](https://deseretbook.com/p/extremes-how-keep-your-virtues-becoming-vices-robert-eaton-67710?ref=detailed-card-2&variant_id=32278-paperback).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles ImageChristofferson. ““Abide in My Love.”” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 2, 2016. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/10/abide-in-my-love?lang=eng>.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles ImageElder Dallin H. Oaks. “Why Do We Serve?” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 2, 1984. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1984/10/why-do-we-serve?lang=eng>.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles ImageElder David A. Bednar. “The Tender Mercies of the Lord.” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 2, 2005. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2005/04/the-tender-mercies-of-the-lord?lang=eng>.

Elder Gary E. Stevenson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The Greatest Easter Story Ever Told.” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 1, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2023/04/11stevenson?lang=eng>.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling.” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/broadcasts/article/ces-devotionals/2012/01/israel-israel-god-is-calling?lang=eng>.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Hearts Knit in Righteousness and Unity.” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 3, 2020. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2020/10/15cook?lang=eng>.

Ellison, Mark D. “The Setting and Sacrament of the Christian Community.” *The Setting and Sacrament of the Christian Community | Religious Studies Center*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/go-ye-all-world/setting-sacrament-christian-community>.

Eyring, Henry J., and Robert L. Eaton. *I Will Lead You Along: The Life of Henry B. Eyring*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://www.amazon.com/Will-Lead-You-Along-Eyring-ebook/dp/B00H7JOFL2>.

Holland, Jeffrey R. "Atonement of Jesus Christ." *Atonement of Jesus Christ | Religious Studies Center*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/latter-day-saint-essentials/atonement-jesus-christ>.

Holland, Jeffrey R. "Come Unto Me." *BYU Speeches*, July 27, 2021. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/jeffrey-r-holland/come-unto/>.

Holzappel, Richard Neitzel. "The Passion of Jesus Christ." *The Passion of Jesus Christ | Religious Studies Center*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/sperry-symposium-classics-new-testament/passion-jesus-christ>.

Huntsman, Eric D. "The Lamb of God: Unique Aspects of the Passion Narrative in John." *The Lamb of God: Unique Aspects of the Passion Narrative in John | Religious Studies Center*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/ behold-lamb-god/lamb-god-unique-aspects-passion-narrative-john>.

Huntsman, Eric D., and Trevan G. Hatch. "Greater Love Hath No Man." *Greater Love Hath No Man | Religious Studies Center*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book/greater-love-hath-no-man>.

June 5–11. John 14–17: "Continue Ye in My Love," January 1, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-individuals-and-families-new-testament-2023/24?lang=eng>.

Lewis, Clive Staples. "The Silver Chair." *Amazon*, 2019. <https://www.amazon.com/Silver-Chair-C-S-Lewis/dp/0064471098>.

Michelle Craig First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency. "Spiritual Capacity." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 5, 2019. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/15craig?lang=eng>.

Nyman, Monte S. "The Passion of Jesus Christ." *The Passion of Jesus Christ | Religious Studies Center*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/sperry-symposium-classics-new-testament/passion-jesus-christ>.

Olson, Camille Fronk. "To Know God Is Life Eternal." *To Know God Is Life Eternal | Religious Studies Center*. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/let-us-reason-together/know-god-life-eternal>.

President Camille N. Johnson Relief Society General President. "Jesus Christ Is Relief." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 2, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2023/04/42johnson?lang=eng>.

President Henry B. Eyring Second Counselor in the First Presidency. "Finding Personal Peace." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 1, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2023/04/17eyring?lang=eng>.

President Russell M. Nelson President of the Church ImageNelson. “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1, 2018. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/04/revelation-for-the-church-revelation-for-our-lives?lang=eng>.

Satterfield, Bruce K. “Gethsemane and Golgotha: Why and What the Savior Suffered: Religious Studies Center.” Gethsemane and Golgotha: Why and What the Savior Suffered | Religious Studies Center. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book-mormon-message-four-gospels/gethsemane-golgotha-why-what-savior-suffered>.

Seventy, Elder Clark G. Gilbert of the. “A Prophet in the Land: Current Prophetic Emphases to Young Adults.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January 27, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/s-and-i-training/2022/01/13gilbert>.

Sharon Eubank First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency. “By Union of Feeling We Obtain Power with God.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 3, 2020. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2020/10/31eubank?lang=eng>.

Sweat, Anthony, and John Hilton. “Developing Teenage Testimonies: Programs and Pedagogy With Spiritual Impact.” Developing Teenage Testimonies: Programs and Pedagogy with Spiritual Impact | Religious Studies Center. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-18-no-2-2017/developing-teenage-testimonies-programs-pedagogy-spiritual-impact>.

Sweat, Anthony. “A King and His Crown: What, How, and Why We Worship.” A King and His Crown | Religious Studies Center. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/tragedy-triumph/king-his-crown>.

Sweat, Anthony. “The Holy Covenants: Living Our Sacred Temple Promises.” The Holy covenants: Living Our Sacred Temple Promises . Accessed May 18, 2023. [https://deseretbook.com/p/holy-covenants-living-our-sacred-temple-promises-ppr?variant\\_id=196206-paperback](https://deseretbook.com/p/holy-covenants-living-our-sacred-temple-promises-ppr?variant_id=196206-paperback).

Sweat, Anthony. “The Holy Invitation: Understanding Your Sacred Temple Endowment.” The Holy Invitation: Understanding Your Sacred Temple Endowment . Accessed May 18, 2023. [https://deseretbook.com/p/holy-invitation?queryID=1165ef3384a04a197057742425a2566c&variant\\_id=146664-paperback](https://deseretbook.com/p/holy-invitation?queryID=1165ef3384a04a197057742425a2566c&variant_id=146664-paperback).

Uchtdorf, Dieter F. “Teaching in the Savior’s Way With Elder Uchtdorf.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, June 12, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/language-recording/2022/05/full-session?lang=eng>.

Welch, John W. “The Legal Cause of Action Against Jesus in John 18:29–30: Religious Studies Center.” The Legal Cause of Action Against Jesus in John 18:29–30 | Religious Studies Center. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://rsc.byu.edu/celebrating-easter/legal-cause-action-against-jesus-john-1829-30>.

## Biographical Information:



Rob Eaton is a professor of religious education and a learning and teaching fellow at BYU-Idaho and will soon be a visiting professor at BYU. Rob spent eight years as an associate academic vice president, including overseeing Pathway and online learning from 2009 – 2013. In a second stint as an associate academic vice president, he oversaw efforts to improve learning and teaching among the campus-based faculty and helped develop a semester-long course for new faculty members, which he continues to team teach.

Rob has an especially winding career path, which was a bit embarrassing to him until he read David Epstein’s *Range*. Now he just feels well-rounded.

Rob earned a bachelor’s in international relations from BYU and a law degree from Stanford, where he was named the outstanding oralist in the law school’s appellate court competition. Before ditching the legal and corporate world for teaching, Rob practiced law for seven years in Seattle and worked as a vice president of a consortium of Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies in the Northwest for three years.

Rob has written a number of books on religious themes as well as co-authoring President Eyring’s biography and assisting Elder Robert D. Hales in compiling *Return*. Most recently, he and two colleagues authored *Improving Learning and Mental Health in the College Classroom*, published as part of a learning and teaching series by West Virginia University Press.

Rob and his wife Dianne have four children and ten grandchildren. Among other things, Rob enjoys hiking, cross-country skiing, trail running, photography, and learning languages. Rob has served in a variety of callings, including mission president

## **Fair Use Notice:**

The *Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* may make use of copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright holder. This constitutes a “fair use” and any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this podcast is offered publicly and without profit, to the public uses or the internet for comment and nonprofit educational and informational purposes. Copyright Disclaimer under Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, allowance is made for

fair use” for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. In such cases, fair use is permitted.

No copyright(s) is/are claimed.

The content is broadcasted for study, research, and educational purposes.

The broadcaster gains no profit from broadcasted content. This falls under “Fair Use” guidelines:

[www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html](http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html).

**Note:**

The *Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints nor Brigham Young University. The opinions expressed on episodes represent the views of the guest and podcasters alone. While the ideas presented may vary from traditional understandings or teachings, they in no way reflect criticism of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day leaders, policies, or practices.



Hank Smith:	00:00:03	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name is Hank Smith and I'm your host and I'm here with my commandment keeping co-host John Bytheway. Welcome John Bytheway.
John Bytheway:	00:00:14	And one of those commandments is repent.
Hank Smith:	00:00:18	Yeah, I'm glad you keep that commandment daily. Hey John, we are going to be in the Gospel of John today. Does that ever get weird for you that we keep talking about the Gospel of John?
John Bytheway:	00:00:29	I'll take it. I like having that name. That's a good name.
Hank Smith:	00:00:32	The Gospel of John. And Jesus is going to say He is the way and you are the Bytheway, so I mean, it's a perfect fit really. John, we needed an expert to join us for these chapters in the Gospel of John, who's joining us?
John Bytheway:	00:00:46	Yes. Today we have Brother Rob Eaton. We call him Dr. Eaton. He has a JD, so we can still think of him as Dr. Eaton, and he's coming to us recently from Idaho. So let me explain. He was the associate academic vice president for learning and teaching at BYU Idaho. He and his wife Diane have four children, 10 grandchildren, and two more on the way. Before presiding over the Washington Federal Way Mission with his wife, Rob served as the associate academic vice president for online and pathway at BYU Idaho and also taught in religious education. He's a graduate of BYU and Stanford Law School, there's the JD, and is the author or co-author of multiple books including President Eyring's biography, called I Will Lead You Along. And also recently published Improving Learning and Mental Health in the College Classroom. Did you say West Virginia was part of that?
Robert Eaton:	00:01:48	West Virginia University Press, they've got a teaching and learning series that we're proud to be part of.
John Bytheway:	00:01:53	Yes, and that caught my ear because my son is serving his mission in West Virginia right now.



Robert Eaton: 00:01:58 Wonderful.

John Bytheway: 00:01:59 Well, almost heaven, West Virginia. That's how I refer to it. Brother Eaton was recently released as a stake president in Idaho and will be starting in the religious education faculty at BYU on August 1st. So thank you for joining us today, Brother Eaton.

Robert Eaton: 00:02:15 Thanks so much for having me. John, I have been a fan since... You won't recall this, but you read a manuscript of mine for Deseret Book and, unsolicited, sent me a very kind email that, I think, later turned into a blurb for Digging Deeper. For a first time author with Deseret Book, that made a huge difference to me. I'm like, "John Bytheway just sent me an email and he likes my book." I was thrilled.

Hank Smith: 00:02:38 That's great.

John Bytheway: 00:02:40 That's nice to hear.

Hank Smith: 00:02:41 Rob, thank you for being here. We're so happy to have you. I've been looking forward to this for a long time, with sharing you with our audience. We are going to be in the Gospel of John primarily. I wanted to read this from the manual and then turn the reins over to you and see where you want to go with this.

00:02:59 It says, "Today we call it the Last Supper, but we don't know if Jesus' disciples fully realized, when they gathered for the annual Passover feast, that this would be their last meal with their master before His death. Jesus, however, knew that His hour was come." That is John 13:1. "He would soon face the suffering of Gethsemane, the betrayal and denial of His closest friends, and an agonizing death on the cross. Yet even with all of this looming before him, Jesus' focus was not on himself but on His disciples. What would they need to know in the days and years ahead? Jesus' tender teachings in John 14 through 17, reveal how He feels about His disciples then and now. Among the many comforting truths He shared was the reassurance that, in one sense, He would never leave us. 'If you keep my commandments,' He promised, 'You shall abide in my love.'"

00:03:54 Beautiful opening paragraph out of the manual. Rob, where do you want to go from here?

Robert Eaton: 00:03:58 Well, if I might start with just one quote from Elder Bednar, about an approach to studying the scriptures. I happened to attend this talk in person, that he gave years ago to religious

educators. He said, "We are all familiar with the adage that giving a man a fish feeds him for one meal. Teaching the man to fish, on the other hand, feeds him for a lifetime. As parents and gospel instructors, you and I are not in the business of distributing fish. Rather, our work is to help individuals learn to fish and become spiritually self-reliant. This important objective is best accomplished as we encourage and facilitate learners acting in accordance with correct principles, as we help them to learn by doing."

00:04:35 So, I'd love to, if it's all right, do as you two do so often, and as so many of your guests have done, show our work as we go. Share insights and what are some of the scripture techniques, scripture study techniques, even some of the tools. My dear friend and office neighbor Ross Baron said his favorite app is the Blue Letter Bible. It's my second favorite app. I love the Gospel Library app and I have my students use it in ways that, even as digital natives, some of them aren't familiar with and they come away with a greater love for it. I think it's an underappreciated tool in the church. I'd like to just put in a couple plugs for that as we go through, if that's all right.

Hank Smith: 00:05:11 Okay, that sounds fantastic.

Robert Eaton: 00:05:12 So let's start with context as a scripture study tool. And incidentally the Come Follow Me stuff that the church has produced is really so good, some of the best curriculum writing in years. So kudos to whoever's name is not on that, who wrote that stuff. So already it provides us with some context. But as you think about this, what are some of the most important things you would want any listener or friend to know about the context of these amazing chapters?

00:05:37 Incidentally, some scholars call this the upper room discourse because it takes place in the upper room, some of the last words of the Savior to His disciples in mortality. I love last words. Last words of prophets, King Benjamin's address, Alma 36 through 42. And these, of course, are far from the last words of the Savior. We get to hear Him today and He still reveals His will. But these are the last words, in mortality, to His apostles, and that seems pretty significant. We put great weight on everything that Jesus says. It seems like these words are especially salient, that He teaches for this last time, he's got a chance to sit around a table with His apostles before He begins to embark on the suffering that will occur in Gethsemane and again on Golgotha.

Hank Smith: 00:06:33 We mentioned this last week with Dr. Camille Olson, that if you look in the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, this last supper event is 10 or 11 verses in those gospels. But then John takes it and expands it to five chapters. Now that's a fourth of the Gospel of John, is spent on this last night. So John, as the writer, has got to be thinking, "Look, I know you have those other accounts but this, you're going to want this one, you're going to want to have all this extra information about that night." So I find that profound, that John is going to spend five chapters on one night of the Savior's life. His book is only a total of 21 chapters, that tells me that this evening was significant.

Robert Eaton: 00:07:19 To have been there, to have been a fly on the wall for that evening, wouldn't that be something? It strikes me that this is the ultimate graduate school seminar on discipleship and maybe leadership too. It's for the apostles. It's on the kind of discipleship that endures and exalts those who follow Jesus. And it does that by helping us align our wills completely, so completely with him and the Father, that in the end we become united with them.

00:07:46 It's actually a nice bookend to the Sermon on the Mount, which we read in Verse 1 of Matthew 5, was for those disciples who came up the hill to meet him. I love Sermon on the Mount for everyone, but I think it's especially for those who lead, are really the dedicated core followers of Jesus. And here we get kind of a disciple leadership seminar from Jesus, and one that will come before some dark challenging days ahead. I just can't imagine what that would be like after Jesus's death, then, to be Peter James or John. President Eyring, in his latest conference talk said, "Fierce forces of evil were bearing down on him and would soon come upon His disciples."

00:08:29 And when I think about that, I don't mean to paint the dark picture of today, but for disciples of Jesus Christ, it does look like more persecution lies ahead than we've had in the past, perhaps. President Nelson said it this way, "Why do we need such resilient faith? Because difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each of us will be tested. The apostle Paul warned that in the latter days, those who diligently follow the Lord shall suffer persecution. That very persecution can either crush you into silent weakness or motivate you to be more exemplary and courageous in your daily lives."

00:09:08 So as we look ahead to, maybe, some challenging times of our own, I think the truths the Savior teaches in this last mortal instruction to His leaders, His faithful apostles, are especially

relevant for us. And He does all this before he's going to do the most difficult thing in the history of the world, just hours before. And I don't know how you get before a big talk or something else, sometimes I struggle to be as kind to and mindful to others as I would like to be. And yet he's completely outward facing as He buoys up and instructs, lovingly teaches His apostles, just hours and even minutes before crossing over the brook and going into Gethsemane.

- John Bytheway: 00:09:50 I love what you said about a graduate seminar on discipleship. I was listening to a Christian pastor, a presentation he gave, and he used the phrase we don't use as often, I guess, but who are you disciplined by? He talked about a generation disciplined by social media and disciplined by TikTok or by this singer or this celebrity. And that's a good way to think of it. Who am I disciplined by? And I like that the word discipline is in disciple and we want to be disciplined by Christ. And here's that seminar. I like the way you set that up.
- Robert Eaton: 00:10:26 Discipleship which endures and exalts. I wrote that down.
- John Bytheway: 00:10:30 Oh wonderful.
- Robert Eaton: 00:10:31 Well, so we'll hit a bunch of principles. We won't hit everything and maybe we'll combine some topical and sequential approaches. For example, when we hit the Holy Ghost, we'll go ahead and draw all the passages about the Holy Ghost into that discussion. In John 14 there's some stuff on the relationship between the Father and the Son, but we might save that for John 17 and hit those topics there. So let's start with verses 2 through 6. One of you mind reading that?
- John Bytheway: 00:10:57 Okay, this is John 14, starting Verse 2 and going to Verse 6, "In my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would've told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, 'Lord we know not whether thou go and how can we know the way?' Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No man come unto the father but by me.'"
- Robert Eaton: 00:11:36 You got to give Thomas some credit there for having the gumption to say, "We don't know what you're talking about." N.T. Wright, one of my favorite biblical scholars and Christians, says that the Gospel of John is laced with stories, instances of people taking Jesus literally when He is not speaking literally, and fun exchanges, and this is maybe another one of those,

Thomas trying to... We don't have the coordinates, we don't have GPS. How do we get there? And Jesus gives this answer, that is at the heart of His Gospel, and I want to start with that one and the symbolism.

00:12:07 So you might be thinking about the significance of way, truth and life, and we'll start there. But let me blather on for just a minute about the I am statements in John. So there are seven famous I am statements there. There're actually more than that, but seven that say, "I am the vine, I am the good shepherd," that have what, I guess, grammarians call the nominative predicate.

00:12:28 I had this question, maybe you've had it, but I've been wondering this for years. If every time someone said, "I am," did other people pick up stones or fall over backwards? I mean, surely you had to have a way to say, "I am," in Jesus' day without invoking the name of Jehovah or having people think you were claiming to be the Messiah or even Jehovah himself. And so I found a nice little blog by a linguist who teaches at a theology seminary, and we'll get that in the show notes. He argues that he would reserve that... Many other scholars say there are echoes of Jehovah from Exodus 3:14 and the latter half of Isaiah in any of the I am statements. He would reserve it for the ones that just say, "I am," that don't have something following the I am. John 8:58 is an example of that. "Before Abraham was, I am." So he says that's one where we legitimately can say He's really invoking Jehovah.

00:13:28 But for the rest of these, he says, I would focus on the symbolic significance of what follows. I am the, and so that's what we'll do here. "I am the way, the truth and the life." This is the sixth of the seven statements in John. The seventh one is also in this passage, "I am the vine." Beautiful, powerful symbols. What stands out to you? I should have also given you a heads-up on this, but I have to tell you, my favorite shows are the ones where you're more like a jazz ensemble than backup speakers because your insights are just so good. You don't really need me to help you through these passages. I don't know anything about them you don't know, but I love getting to talk about them together with you. So let's begin with the symbolism of way, truth or life. Any of those stand out as favorites to you? Thoughts that you've got on them?

John Bytheway: 00:14:15 I like the first part, I am the way. And I've learned that before they begin calling themselves the followers of Christ, calling themselves Christians, their movement was called The Way. In King James, it sometimes says, "That Way." There's also some

references to The way, and I think that's interesting. They would call the movement The Way, early in the church, but I've got written in my margin that He did not say find your own way or find your own truth. He said, "I am the way."

- Robert Eaton: 00:14:45 John, we are on the same page. And when we get to, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," we're going to come back and talk about the significance of absolute truth. But I'll just say right now, if you follow Jesus Christ, you believe in absolute truth. Heck, we believe He is the absolute truth with a capital T. And that's quite a different approach than saying find your own way, find your own truth. I love that nickname for the followers of Jesus Christ, The Way. That's just a great name for a movement, isn't it?
- Hank Smith: 00:15:15 Earlier in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." And then here He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." So we could go back to His earlier statement and hear him say, "You shall know me and I can make you free." John just talked about in a world that says keeping the commandments is not freedom, that Jesus says the exact opposite. I can give you true freedom, follow my commandments and I can expand your freedom in ways you never thought possible.
- Robert Eaton: 00:15:49 John loves this term, truth. In fact, here's a fun little feature in Gospel Library. You can go to the Gospel of John and then when you click search, before you hit enter, it gives you the option find truth in the Gospel of John or single conference talk or a decade of conference talks or a volume of scripture. Now, they don't do the math for you, so you've got to count it up, but I did the math for us in advance. Truth shows up 32 times in John's Gospel. Now that includes chapter headings. A second place goes to Matthew with five references, and Matthew and Mark have only three. It's a really simple technique, but a great way to see the usage of a term throughout a particular book of scripture. So we can see that this is a point, the point that you got, Hank, that that's exactly what John was hoping that you would recognize. He's been teaching us all along that Jesus Christ is the truth.
- Hank Smith: 00:16:42 Rob, tell me again. So I can go to the search engine.
- Robert Eaton: 00:16:44 So you go to the search engine and then you can just type in truth and then it'll give you choices. You can say truth on page, and so you can limit your search there to a particular thing. And if you put it in quotation marks, you get an exact phrase like Palm Sunday. So I was curious. I thought, "Wow, they're talking

a lot about Palm Sunday." I don't remember many references to it, so I looked it up. So when you go to general conference, it lets you download things by decade, so you can also search by decade. And in the decade of the 1970s, the term didn't show up. It showed up once in 1982, once in a conference talk in 1993, then not again until 2008, and once in 2009 and then once in 2017. Nine different talks, nine different speakers quoted it 21 times in April 2023.

00:17:36 That's just interesting for me, to see how something like references to the doctrine of Christ have exploded in the last 10 years or so. And that helps me, I think, align myself with the Lord and His servants, to see these are the things that they're emphasizing in our day. Anyway, a little tangent about that tool that I've become a fan of.

Hank Smith: 00:17:55 Yeah, that's really great. So all you have to do... I just want to make sure our audience gets this. If you are in the general conference tab and then you start searching, it'll say, "Do you want to look up that term in just general conference or just recent general conference?"

Robert Eaton: 00:18:11 If you're like me, and you're a little trigger-happy, you go to hit enter right away. And then you get that term everywhere in Gospel Library and you can still filter after the fact. But it's easiest if you'll just wait a moment and then find it in that particular chapter or book of scripture.

Hank Smith: 00:18:27 I have to admit, Rob, I've never read some of the suggestions that come up. I've just hit enter. I've just typed in what I wanted and hit enter, not knowing that it was going to bring up some options for me. That would've been actually really helpful.

Robert Eaton: 00:18:40 It's a simple thing, but just even the finding on page when you think, "I know somewhere in this chapter it says that." Well, in the chapter, I click on page and then it'll take me down to find that word in the talk or chapter.

Hank Smith: 00:18:53 Yeah. How long has that been in front of me and I've missed it?

Robert Eaton: 00:18:55 Not too long. So it's a relatively recent development, but they keep doing great work and we don't get to see their names. So thanks to all you guys.

John Bytheway: 00:19:03 I was at a mission farewell and Brother Kenneth Cope, one of my dear friends, he had written another verse to, Because I Have Been Given Much, I too must give, for missionaries. And I

think I memorized it. So because it was a farewell, they had this verse on the back of the program, if I recall right. And it went like this, "Because of thy great mission, Lord, I too will serve. I'll leave the comfort of my home to teach thy word. I'll seek thy sheep who've gone astray and those who've never known the way. I will make thy work my work today." Isn't that nice? And I saw his double meaning in that. And those who've never known the way. The way is the plan of salvation, but the way can also be the Savior himself.

- Robert Eaton: 00:19:52 John, I love that verse from Kenneth Cope, and I love that insight. In fact, anytime I see the word way and the scriptures, I like to think, what if I capitalize that W, what does that do for me?
- John Bytheway: 00:20:05 And you mentioned that, and it is capitalized in... I've noticed in the book of Acts in the NIV, it talks about those who are in the Way or the members of the Way. And it's capitalized there because it's one of His names. It's one of Jesus' names.
- Robert Eaton: 00:20:20 It's one of my favorite names. By the way, the Greek word translated here is way. When I look it up in the Blue Letter Bible, I get stuff and then I just copy and paste that into a note. I'll highlight way, and then among the options there, there's little note, and then those become my scripture margins digitally. I've just filled my scriptures up with stuff like this. And the word here is hadas or hodos, depending on whom I listen to. And here's how it's been defined in Strong's Bible Dictionary. By the way, I love the guy on the Blue Letter Bible. I think he's from the South. So I think I might be getting my Greek with a slight Southern accent, but it's beautiful
- John Bytheway: 00:20:59 Southern Greece.
- Robert Eaton: 00:21:01 Yes. I feel like he's a faith brother. "A way, a traveled road, a traveler's way, journey, traveling." So that's all what we would've expected. But the second one is, "Metaphorically, a course of conduct, a way that is a manner of thinking, feeling, deciding." A manner of thinking, feeling, deciding. This is what Jesus invites all of us to do, is to adopt His way of thinking, feeling and deciding. It's more than just a map. And it is a map, we'll talk about some of the instructions we get in the rest of John 14 and 15 about how to get there. But it's a way to be and it's the way that leads to the greatest blessings heavenly Father has in store for His children.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:45 That's wonderful, Rob.



John Bytheway: 00:21:47 A course of conduct reminds me of 2 Nephi 5, "We did live after the manner of happiness." It's a way of living, it's a course of conduct. I like that.

Robert Eaton: 00:21:58 A manner of happiness. Okay, what was that reference, John? 2 Nephi?

John Bytheway: 00:22:02 2 Nephi 5. Is that where that is? Let's look it up on our Gospel Library.

Robert Eaton: 00:22:06 So this is what I'm doing here. So I highlight that and I go to link. And then I have to hit a few buttons, I got to go to scriptures and Book of Mormon. And now, by the way, before, you always used to have to know, you couldn't search in mid connecting. Now it lets you search too, but it's still most helpful if you know it in advance. So I just go to 2 Nephi, to the scripture I want to get to. I touch it, it highlights it, it gives me an add in the upper right-hand corner, and then save.

00:22:37 Once I do that, from now on, every time I read John 14:6, or that passage in 2 Nephi, thanks to John, those two scriptures will pop up connected. And I find linking them in that way, even just as I look for opportunities to link scriptures, it changes the way... And for my students, it changes the way they've studied the scriptures. You're reading with that peripheral vision in mind. Constantly doing what John's always doing, popping off with wonderful Book of Mormon references for almost any scripture that people have got. It's really a great way to help all things come together in one. So thank you for making that connection for me, John.

Hank Smith: 00:23:15 And, Rob, I've noticed with my own use of the Gospel Library app, I can't lose these notes. I could leave these scriptures somewhere and they're gone forever, all I got to do is log in on a different device and I've got all my notes.

John Bytheway: 00:23:29 If I change it on my iPad, it changes it on my phone. And for some reason I have both of those things. But I love that, like you said, Hank, I'm not going to lose this because they're going to sync with each other.

Robert Eaton: 00:23:40 The other thing, is it comes with me wherever my cell phone is. So I have literally tapped into stuff I've done on Gospel library on a hike, talking with cousins and sharing the gospel with somebody in some way. It's literally right there. So as a teacher and church leader, I tag things constantly, making my own topical guide, if you will. So I might have a category called Find

your Truth, Not, full of scriptures and quotes to say that's not really what Jesus is inviting us to do.

- 00:24:11 But then anytime I feel prompted to address that, I've got several scriptures and conference talks that relate to that. And then I just build those up over time. And it's a great way to treasure up the words of life. And then with a little bit of cheating, it'll be giving you, in the very hour, that portion that shall be meted out to man. I think the Lord expects us take advantage of the wonderful tools he's provided and this is one of them.
- John Bytheway: 00:24:35 Shall we not make use of the things the Lord has provided? Sorry, that's a War Chapter's reference. Shall we not make use of the things the Lord has provided? Well yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:24:45 Ah, let's make use of the Gospel Library app.
- John Bytheway: 00:24:48 Wonderful.
- Hank Smith: 00:24:48 Right? My seminary teacher, we used to memorize scriptures. He'd say, "You're not always going to have your scriptures with you." And I'm like, "Well, we showed you. We do."
- John Bytheway: 00:24:58 Well actually...
- Robert Eaton: 00:25:00 By the way, I love my hard copy of the scriptures. For some people it's almost a... They're passionate about the debate, but I don't think they're mutually exclusive. And so I've found this is just a powerful set of tools.
- 00:25:12 One more question about truth. In John 7:17, the Savior prays to the Father that His followers will be sanctified by the truth. That's an interesting phrase, a thought-provoking concept to me. Any thoughts on how truth sanctifies? I actually don't have the answer, so I'm hoping one of you does have a thought about this.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:32 Yeah, I bet John does.
- Robert Eaton: 00:25:34 How does truth sanctify?
- John Bytheway: 00:25:36 If truth sanctifies? What does error do? It does the opposite, leads us in the wrong ways.
- Robert Eaton: 00:25:44 It pollutes.

John Bytheway: 00:25:46 Yeah. Distracts. Truth sanctifies. The Holy Ghost is a sanctifier. Truth is the Holy Ghost.

Robert Eaton: 00:25:54 And the true principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ sanctify us as we exercise faith in Christ. Repent, embrace him, bind ourselves to him through ordinances and covenants.

John Bytheway: 00:26:07 That sounds like the doctrine of Christ.

Robert Eaton: 00:26:09 Exactly. The doctrine of Christ sanctifies us. And it's the ultimate truth.

Hank Smith: 00:26:15 I had just a great quote from Brigham Young. He said, "Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' Well, we can turn around and say, 'Satan is the way, the truth and the death, or the way and the falsehood.' Can you perceive the difference?" He asks. "But to say that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life is equivalent to saying that He is the only continued or eternal existence. The Lord Jesus Christ works upon a plan of eternal increase of wisdom, intelligence, honor, excellence, power, glory, might and dominion, and the attributes that fill eternity."

00:26:49 He goes on, "What principle does the Devil work upon? To destroy, dissolve, decompose, and tear in pieces." I love this idea that I think Brigham Young is alluding to, from the Doctrine and Covenants, if I live the truth I've been given, I get more light and that light is sanctifying, and if I get more light, I can see more truth. And if I live that truth, then I get more light and that light grow brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

John Bytheway: 00:27:17 The perfect day. Section 50.

Hank Smith: 00:27:19 So that sounds like a sanctifying process to me.

Robert Eaton: 00:27:21 President Nelson, not in this conference, but one before, said a phrase I'd not heard before, "Live the doctrine of Christ." Live the doctrine. And I just love that notion. And live doctrine is a phrase that now shows up in the handbook, that I think is a powerful idea. In Preach My Gospel, there's a line... My wife, when we were getting ready for our mission, I noticed, in block letters, she'd kind of put a block around something. And I said, "Honey, did you mark my copy of Preach My Gospel? She said, "Yes, I did." And I said, "Honey, you don't mess with other people's copy of Preach My Gospel." She said, "Oh yeah, you do because important things are in boxes and they should have put

this in a box and they didn't put it in a box. And you didn't even highlight it, so I had to put it in a box for you."

- 00:28:10 And it's talking about, increasingly, that when we do these things that become an increasingly rewarding pattern of living, it's not a one-time thing we do of having faith in Christ or repenting or even ordinances. It's an increasingly rewarding pattern of living an upward virtual cycle as we live the doctrine of Christ. I love that Brigham Young quote, and I had not heard it before, Hank. I'm getting that from the show notes, and I'll put it in my notes for John 14:6.
- Hank Smith: 00:28:39 Well, there's another great resource out there for people. It's called scriptures.byu.edu.
- Robert Eaton: 00:28:44 It's amazing.
- Hank Smith: 00:28:46 You just can go to any verse in scripture and you can find out if it's been referenced in any conference talk. So I went to John 14:6, and there's 142 references of different talks, of those who have used this. You can watch and listen to some of the recent ones. You can't watch the ones with Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. Sorry.
- Robert Eaton: 00:29:10 I want that app.
- Hank Smith: 00:29:11 Yeah.
- Robert Eaton: 00:29:11 I want that app, too. And the one that'll show me the video from...
- John Bytheway: 00:29:15 A shout-out to these folks because every six months they're updating it again with general conference and that's an ongoing thing. But I make sure my students have that one. If you ever are given a scripture for a theme, of a talk, start here and you'll have some backup from church leaders.
- Robert Eaton: 00:29:34 That's a great, great, great place to go. But let me just slip in a couple other thoughts about these symbols. Life shows up 49 times in the Gospel of John, only 19 in Matthew, 16 in Luke, eight in Mark. So life is another theme for the Gospel of John. And I don't know all the things it means. I love that Brigham Young quote best of all. Elder Oaks once taught, then Elder Oaks, "Jesus Christ is the life of the world because of His unique position in what the scripture's called the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death. His resurrection and His atonement save us from both physical and spiritual death." And then I

might add this thought, it's just speculative. But you know how when life's going well and you say, "This is the life. This is living." I feel like when we really follow Jesus Christ, even in mortality, He's the source of joyful living, joyous life.

00:30:27 And then one last thought, this is from the last paragraph of that revised For the Strength of Youth pamphlet, and it's just powerful. "Of all the possible choices, the one that matters most is the choice to follow Jesus Christ. He is the strength of youth. His gospel is the joyful way back to your heavenly Father." Again, kudos to whoever wrote that.

Hank Smith: 00:30:51 Yeah, he might be here.

Robert Eaton: 00:30:52 I wondered.

Hank Smith: 00:30:55 John, I don't know if our listeners know that you serve on the Young Men's Board. We don't talk about that all that much, do we?

John Bytheway: 00:31:01 No. They changed it to the Young Men's Advisory Council. It's a thrill. We're going to say goodbye to Elder Corbitt, who is in the Young Men's general presidency and is now called to the Seventy. But Brother Mike Nelson is now in the presidency, he's been there as a secretary in all of our meetings. And, man, I just love these guys.

Hank Smith: 00:31:23 Fantastic. And did you write that last paragraph, John?

John Bytheway: 00:31:27 It was Elder Corbitt that referred to the doctrine of Christ in his talk. It was one of the references to the doctrine of Christ in his talk. And he gave an amazing address to the new chaplains of the church, which you can find at [churchofjesuschrist.org](http://churchofjesuschrist.org). And talked about activism versus the doctrine of Christ.

Robert Eaton: 00:31:47 So, in fact, Elder Corbitt, it's a perfect segue to the next thing I want to talk about here. In the last half of the verse. A few months ago, Elder Clark Gilbert, the Commissioner for Education, invited religious educators in the church to lace five prophetic emphases throughout our teaching. And one of them is teaching truth with love. And I've got to tell you, John 14:6, this is one of the most important truths of the entire Gospel of Jesus Christ. But this last part is one of the most difficult to teach. And it's becoming increasingly difficult. And I think Elder Corbitt and the first presidency and many others do a great job of teaching truth with love.

00:32:26 So let me give you a question and then I'll set it up a little bit more. But my question is going to be, how do you teach this truth, that there is no other way to the Father, with love? In a way that doesn't compromise or dilute the truth, but doesn't unnecessarily offend people. So let me set it up a little bit by saying, I think this is going to become increasingly difficult and increasingly important as the percentage of people in the United States, and throughout the world, who identify as Christians drops, and even as the percentage of people who believe in absolute truth drops. Years ago, a woman cut my hair, and I was sharing the gospel. And she said, "Well, like Jesus said, 'All roads lead to heaven.'"

John Bytheway: 00:33:12 He did?

Robert Eaton: 00:33:12 I said, "You know, actually, that's not what He said. In fact, He kind of said the opposite. He said that He's the way, the truth and the life and there's no way to the Father but by Him." And she said, "Oh, well that's just what I heard He said. I've never read the Bible." She was... It's pretty indicative of casual Christians and the way they think of Jesus. It's a lot like the way that Nehor describes God, kind of the Santa Claus, Jesus, everything goes, doesn't matter, find your truth and everything will work.

00:33:43 Even among practicing Christians, there was a 2019 survey that found that almost half of the millennials, 40 something percent, agree at least somewhat, that it is wrong to share one's personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith. That's mind-boggling.

00:34:02 So at the beginning of last semester, I did this role play, at the beginning of my missionary prep class. I said, "So you're at home talking with a roommate about serving a mission. And they say, 'I find if I just do my truth and let other people do their truth, we all get along. In the end, really, what other people do is none of my business.' How do you respond? Go." So I let them role play for a while and then we discussed it. I shouldn't have been surprised, but I was surprised at how many of these people, who are in a class to prepare to go be full-time missionaries, were saying, "Yeah, what's wrong with that statement? I'm sympathetic to that statement. Tell me more about it."

00:34:41 And by the way, we've made great societal progress on multiple fronts, and have a lot of progress yet to make. And yet Satan, as he always does, seeks to then harness that to his own gain and then have us get carried away in ways that make it so that to

even say there's an absolute truth becomes a controversial statement.

00:35:02 Oh, here's my last thought on this and then I'm curious to know what you do with this particular truth that can be challenging to teach. Elder Holland, in a September 2012 Ensign article, Israel, Israel God is Calling said, "I know of no more important ability than to walk that careful path, taking a moral stand according to what God has declared and the laws He has given, but doing it compassionately and with understanding and great charity. I know of few distinctions that are harder to make or at least harder to articulate, but we must lovingly try to do exactly that. Believe me, brothers and sisters, in the world into which we are moving..." He says this in 2012, "We are going to have a lot of opportunity to develop such strength, display such courage, and demonstrate such compassion all at the same time."

00:35:53 So how do you do it? How do you teach this truth in a way that isn't unnecessarily offensive or weak, kind of, twist on the truth?

John Bytheway:

00:36:01 I can think of something that Dr. Stephen R. Covey used to do at business seminars, to set up what he was going to teach. And he said to people... And usually they were in an unfamiliar setting, like a conference center or something, he would say, "Everybody cover your eyes and point North." And he said he would have people pointing in every direction, including straight up. And then he would say, "Uncover your eyes and look around the room." And they'd look at each other and everybody would be loud, "Oh, I came up the elevator. I can't remember."

00:36:33 And then he would suggest, "Okay, well why don't we just vote on it?" And people would kind of chuckle, like, "We can't. I mean, north isn't subject to popular opinion. You can't vote on north." So he, "Oh, okay, well why don't we have the strongest person in the room decide? So we'll set up an arm wrestling tournament or something." And people kind of laugh at that. "Well no, that's not a power thing." "Oh, okay, well let's have the richest person in the room decide." And I jokingly... That's the golden rule. He who has the gold makes the rules. Well no, that doesn't work. And then, I think, implied, "Well just decide what North is for you, which ensures that everybody's lost unless we all happen to be standing at the south and then it works."

00:37:18 So after he showed that popular opinion and money and power and relativism don't work, he pulled something out of his pocket and you both can guess what it was. It was a compass.

And he would say, "This is true north." And his words, "It's an external reality. It's not up to me, it's not up to you, it just is." And in his business settings, he would talk about let's align our lives with true north, time-honored, timeless principles.

00:37:51 Let me add a Book of Mormon reference, 2 Nephi 31 where Nephi says, "You must press forward." So I tell everybody in the room, "Point forward. Notice we're pointing in opposite directions because I'm at the stand. So maybe forward means whatever you want it to be." Well, no, because Nephi didn't leave us any wiggle room. He said, "You must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ." Forward is Christ-ward. Christ is our true north, but that's how we know we're moving forward. We're going Christ-ward toward him.

Robert Eaton: 00:38:21 Christ is our true north. I love that President Oaks taught the existence of God and the existence of absolute truth are fundamental to life on this earth. Whether they are believed or not.

Hank Smith: 00:38:35 Whenever I try to explain what you're saying here, is walking that very fine balance. I like to use stories. They seem to be diffusing of a situation, like John just did. There's a great story that C.S. Lewis wrote, from his book, The Silver Chair, and it's in the Chronicles of Narnia. There's a girl named Jill, she's in Narnia. If you want to know the background of this, you just need to ask your grandchildren. And she is really thirsty. She's lost in Narnia, she's really thirsty and she finds a clear, bubbling stream. But to her horror, blocking her path to the stream is a huge, terrifying lion. And if you know the Chronicles of Narnia, the lion is Aslan, who represents Christ.

00:39:17 And the lion says, "Are you thirsty?" And she says, "I'm dying of thirst." "Then drink," said the lion. "May I? Could I? Would you mind going away while I do?" Said Jill. The lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. As Jill gazed at the motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience. The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic. "Will you promise not to do anything to me if I drink?" Said Jill. "I make no such promises," said the lion.

00:39:53 Jill was so thirsty now, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer to the lion. "Do you eat girls?" She said. He answered, "I swallow them up. I have consumed girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," said the lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry, it just said it. "I don't dare come and drink,"



said Jill. "Then you will die of thirst," said the lion. "Oh dear," said Jill, coming another step nearer. "I suppose I must go and look for another stream then." And then, this great moment, Aslan says, "Jill, there is no other stream. There is no other way whereby man can be saved." Wow. Isn't that a great story?

Robert Eaton: 00:40:41 That is a great story. Powerful. So as we are unapologetic in teaching that truth, one other thought to round out our cultural references, this is when Penn Jillette, of Penn Teller, famous comedy, magician duo, years ago he was given a copy of a bible and was asked by a reporter if this offended him. He's renowned atheist, he's published books on it. This is what I said, and I think it's really helpful for us.

00:41:08 Let me answer a quick analogy here. In Yellowstone, they've got some areas with boardwalks weaving through geothermal features. Some of those geothermal features look like they would be the most amazing hot tub ever. Turquoise, beautiful colors. So let's say your friend gets kind of hypnotized, starts to walk off the boardwalk toward the... And saying, "I'm jumping in." In today's world, I fear some would just say, "Way to find your truth, way to find your own path. You go march to the beat of your own drummer." What kind of friend does that? If you're really a friend, you say, "Well no, come back."

Hank Smith: 00:41:43 What are you doing?

Robert Eaton: 00:41:43 That's lethal, that's going to kill you. It looks good. It's not. Please come back to the path." And here's what Penn Jillette said, "I've always said that I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and a hell and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward, how much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?" For me, this is one of the best things to help me overcome my fears of testifying of Jesus Christ. When I realized, "Wow, I'm thinking about me if I'm worried that people might be offended."

00:42:24 Now that said, we have some wonderful truths available to us in the Restoration that fill in the postmortal possibilities with more merciful detail than we would have if we just had the Bible. And I think we need to emphasize a couple of those. I was reading a book by an evangelical pastor and I googled him just to see a little bit more about him. And he'd been interviewed by an NBC reporter who asked, "Is Jesus the only way?" And he kind of danced, did a little awkward dance, and at some point

mentioned, "Unless God has a trap door that he hasn't told us about." And then I found an article from another writer just tearing him apart for equivocating, saying, "What kind of answer is this? We know the answer. It's in the Bible. There's no other way and everybody else goes to hell. It's tough truth, but you got to teach it."

00:43:11 And in a way, they're both right. The one, if you had only the Bible, that's what we would think. But this other fellow, I think the light of Christ, was nudging him to think, "There's got to be more of this to this story that I don't know." But he didn't have Section 137 of the Doctrine and Covenants. We do. What an amazing truth to know that, "All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God. And all that shall die henceforth, without a knowledge of it, who would've received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom."

00:43:49 So it's not a free pass, but I take that to mean there're going to be all sorts of people who receive the greatest blessings the Father has in store, who in this life didn't have the right circumstances to know about Jesus Christ. So this is a relatively distinctive truth of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ that we understand there will be all sorts of wonderful people who acted in this life according to all the light and knowledge that they had. They'll continue on that trajectory in the next life, that they won't be able to get in without Jesus. He is the way. He is the only way. There is no other way, but they will have that opportunity, millions and millions of people, in ways that they didn't in this life.

00:44:30 And even for those then who aren't as valiant. As President Oaks recently has taught us, the revealed doctrine of the restored church of Jesus Christ teaches that all the children of God, with exceptions too limited to consider here, will finally end up in a kingdom of glory.

00:44:47 When we go back to John 14:2, there's a Joseph Smith quote here. He doesn't do a Joseph Smith translation, but a Joseph Smith quote that is helpful. He said, "My text is on the resurrection of the dead, which you'll find in the 14th chapter of John. 'In my father's house are many mansions.' It should be, in my father's kingdom are many kingdoms in order that you may be heirs of God and joint heirs with me. There are mansions for those who obey a celestial law and there are other mansions for those who come short of the law, every man in his order."

- 00:45:20 Even as we disagree with people of other faiths, President Nelson and other church leaders, they've modeled for us how we can build on common ground, do good together, even humbly learn from others. Think of President Oak's talk, that was unprecedented, with the first half of his talk was a commercial for participating in any religious community including a synagogue or a mosque.
- 00:45:42 And then he also went on to teach of the distinctive benefits of being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The church has cooperated and put together a 35-page pamphlet, that I love, on Latter-day Saints and Muslims. And that's close to my heart. I developed, and taught for years, a course on Pakistan, at BYU Idaho. And the point of the course wasn't really to make students experts on Pakistan, but to help them think more carefully, more precisely, less sloppily, including in some of the assumptions that they had made about people they didn't know much about, especially Islam.
- 00:46:17 And so we taught them about Krister Stendahl's concept of holy envy, leaving room for seeing good in others. I had a Muslim roommate, and Amad taught me to pray more intensely than I prayed. I was inspired by his example. I didn't budge on the truths of the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, yet there was still room for me to learn from him. So we can simultaneously disagree with others but love them, learn from them, work together with them. I think that's all part of how we teach these truths with love.
- 00:46:48 And for me, then, the final, kind of the bottom line for these first few verses of John 14, are that there's not limited seating in heaven. Salvation is not a zero-sum game. In fact, we're better off trying to help other people get admission to heaven if we want a seat there ourselves. But the seats aren't all the same. There are varying degrees of glory. How we live, what we believe here matters. And mercifully, some people will get chances in the next life that they might not have gotten in this life.
- 00:47:16 And then finally, the only reason any of us can get access to any seat in heaven is because of the way, the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.
- John Bytheway: 00:47:25 That's awesome.
- Robert Eaton: 00:47:26 The rest of the chapter I see as kind of a map for how do we get there. And I'll give you this summary. Exalting discipleship begins with loving Jesus, that love leads to genuine

wholehearted obedience, and that kind of obedience invites the companionship of the Holy Ghost. And all of that yields peace. So let's start with John 14:15. John, would you mind reading that for us?

John Bytheway: 00:47:50

John 14:15, if you love me, keep my commandments.

Robert Eaton: 00:47:55

I don't want to re-plow ground you must have plowed last week. And I don't know because I haven't been able to hear that podcast yet. But you must have talked about if you love me, keep my commandments or love one another. My wife's introduced me to the love languages concept, that's based on a popular book. For her, she would much rather have me do the dishes than say, "I love you." Everybody's got a different mode. Her mode is doing stuff. For Mother's Day, I found her favorite gift is, the Saturday before Mother's Day, it's project day. We just go do stuff. And by the way, I have never enjoyed working in the yard or cleaning the garage more than I do on Mother's Day Saturday because I'm doing it out of love.

00:48:34

Well, here Jesus tells us His love language is obedience. Keep his commandments. Not perfection, but wholeheartedly, earnestly striving. When I hear people debate what's necessary to be saved, to make it to heaven, I sometimes wonder, for Christians, if we're asking the wrong question. To me that feels almost like students saying, is this on the final? And then closing their laptop if it's not. Wouldn't a better question be, what does Jesus want me to do? How can I show my love to Him? How can I become more like Him?

00:49:10

I was blessed, in working on President Eyring's biography, to read all his journals and read everything we could find that he'd ever written. And one of his teachings that stood out most to me was from a 1977 Ensign article, that old section, I Have a Question. The question here is not important, but I love this answer. "If my main motive is to please God, I will be sensitive to the spirit as it warns me away from what would displease Him. Once I've decided I want eternal life more than business success, I will have crossed the great gulf between wanting to know what God would permit and trying to do what He would prefer." I love that last line. I think I probably would've called the biography What God Prefers. That is the mantra that's guided President Eyring's life. And that really needs to guide the life of any disciples. And Jesus lets us know, what He would prefer is that we keep His commandments.

Hank Smith: 00:50:05

Wow, that's a great idea. Across the great divide from what God would permit to what He would prefer.

Robert Eaton: 00:50:13 By the way, that's 1977. But I think that kind of discipleship, undergirded by asking what would the Lord prefer and not just what would He permit? That's the kind of exalting discipleship Jesus is teaching His disciples about here in the upper room discourse. By the way, when I obey out of love, I am so much happier and my efforts are so much more effective.

00:50:38 We would do a mean little trick with our new missionaries and have them play missionary rule Boggle. And you would come up with as many rules or commandments missionaries are supposed to keep in just 90 seconds. And then we'd put them all up on the board and we'd say, "Wow, these are great rules. We're going to talk about getting up on time and staying with your companion." But most of the time, this wouldn't be true today. In fact, I've tried it with my classes. They get it now because there has been an explosion of references, in general conference talks, to Matthew 22:36-40, to the two great commandments. Now, I can't trick my students anymore. When I ask them, among the first commandments that they mention are love God and love His children.

00:51:15 So I would say in this mission, the two most important rules are found right here in Matthew 22. And on them, hang everything else. Elder Oaks, in one of his first talks, President Oaks, as the new member of the Twelve, has spoke on, I think it was called the Reasons We Serve. And he described a spectrum of motivation from reasons unworthy of saints all the way up to serving out of love of God and love of His children. We've told our missionaries, the sooner you can get to this end of the spectrum, the happier you'll be and the more effective you'll be.

00:51:44 And I found that that's true for me. When I serve for extrinsic reasons, because I'm supposed to, because somebody else wants me to, because I want to impress somebody, I'm less happy than what I serve for intrinsic purposes because I feel like this will please God. And President Nelson's moved us in that direction with his wonderful question about what sign do I want to give on the Sabbath? As a kid, my Sabbath day approach was mom, may I do this? What will the Lord permit? I just wanted her to decide for me and say yes. But in a precursor to what President Nelson would later teach us, she would say, "Well, will it bring you closer to the Lord?" She wanted me to decide. She wanted me to think. But the Savior here is teaching us when we love Him, we keep His commandments, and when we keep those commandments out of love, we keep them differently, more joyfully, and our service is more effective.

John Bytheway: 00:52:33 So many of the commandments will protect us from so many not very good consequences that sometimes I think if you love yourself, keep the commandments because you're going to avoid so many problems. So yeah, if you love the Savior, keep the commandments. But look at how difficult life becomes if you don't. And do the math, if you love yourself, keep the commandments, you'll protect yourself from a lot of hurt, heartache and sorrow.

Robert Eaton: 00:53:00 Do the consequences math. What a great thought. So in these chapters, we probably learn more about the Holy Ghost than we do in, maybe, the rest of the New Testament combined. I haven't done the numerical analysis there, and my guess is it's for a couple of reasons. One, we didn't have the gift of the Holy Ghost operative, according to John Chapter 7, Verse 39 and the Bible Dictionary, during the Savior's ministry. The power of the Holy Ghost was there. So in some ways this is like the baptismal talk on the Holy Ghost, for the apostles who will soon be getting the gift of the Holy Ghost. But they're also going to really need the gift of the Holy Ghost. Tough things are ahead for them, and so we get some great instruction about various roles the Holy Ghost plays. So let's just jump in and draw from any of these chapters, scriptures that teach us about what the Holy Ghost does and how that blesses us. Hank or John, any that you want to start with?

Hank Smith: 00:53:58 Sure. Where do you want me to start, Rob?

Robert Eaton: 00:54:00 Well, you could start by just comforting us. John 14:16 and 18.

Hank Smith: 00:54:05 Verse 16 says, "And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever." Verse 18 says, "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you."

Robert Eaton: 00:54:16 Any thoughts about the role of the Holy Ghost as a comforter? Which the New Testament manual tells us the Greek word... I'm not even going to say it. Parakletos. Translated as comforter in the King James version, appears only in John. The word is composed of para meaning besides and kletos meaning one who is summoned. So parakletos, and I'm probably not saying it right, is one who is summoned to another's side as a helper, intercessor, or advocate.

John Bytheway: 00:54:41 I think that advocate comes from parakletos, too. I've read that before. That's interesting because that's another one of my favorite titles for the Savior, is I'm your advocate with the Father, in one of John Epistles, I think. I love that a comforter is... We have that name for a nice, warm blanket.

Hank Smith: 00:55:00 This verse, John 14:16 is referenced in one of my all-time favorite talks from general conference. And that was the Tender Mercies of the Lord from Elder Bednar, his very first talk in general conference.

Robert Eaton: 00:55:11 I don't remember that one. I'm just joking. I'm joking. That's become part of our cultural lexicon, Tender Mercies.

Hank Smith: 00:55:18 I was like, wait, what?

Robert Eaton: 00:55:20 Yeah, get him out of here.

Hank Smith: 00:55:21 Get him out of my town. Get him off my podcast. All right. Elder Bednar, in that talk, says this. He says, "Recall how the Savior instructed His apostles that He would not leave them comfortless. Not only would He send another comforter, even the Holy Ghost, but the Savior said that He would come to them. Let me suggest that one of the ways whereby the Savior comes to each of us is through His abundant and tender mercies. As you and I face challenges and tests in our lives, the gift of faith and the appropriate sense of personal confidence that reaches beyond our own capacity, are two examples of the tender mercies of the Lord." And he goes on and says, "Repentance and forgiveness of sins and peace of conscience are examples of the tender mercies of the Lord." This is the Savior saying, I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you. Such a beautiful talk centered on these verses.

Robert Eaton: 00:56:13 In John 18, comfortless, that word there is rendered orphan in some other translations. Thayer's Greek Lexicon, that I see when I look it up, and Blue Letter Bible says, "Bereft of a father, of parents, fatherless, of those bereft of a teacher guide or guardian." He's not going to leave us without a teacher, guide or guardian. What wonderful descriptions for the role of the Holy Ghost, a teacher, guide and guardian. I love the references guiding us into all truths.

00:56:39 So verse 17, it's called aletheias, referred to as the spirit of truth. And John 15:26, we get this truth about the Holy Ghost, "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

00:57:01 And then this reference in John 16:13, "Howbeit, when He shall come, the spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, He will show you all things." I love this

imagery of guiding you into all truth. I didn't grow up in a family with a water ski boat. Our speed was more a life raft we used to float down the river. And it usually leaked, but occasionally somebody would invite us to go water-skiing, and I was intrigued with how you put the boat back on the trailer at the end of the day. And you had to get it just right or it wouldn't stay on. And someone would guide that boat into that trailer, little left, a little right, to find just the right spot. I love this imagery, especially in our day, of how the Holy Ghost will guide us in a critical exercise.

00:57:51 This quote from President Nelson has become justifiably famous, this invitation, "My beloved brothers and sisters, I plead with you to increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation, choose to do the spiritual work required to enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost and hear the voice of the spirit more frequently and more clearly." I think it's important, though, to recognize the context in which that occurs. He prefaces it with this statement, "I am optimistic about the future. It will be filled with opportunities for each of us to progress, contribute, and take the gospel to every corner of the Earth. But I am also not naive about the days ahead. We will live in a world that is complex and increasingly contentious. The constant availability of social media and a 24-hour news cycle bombard us with relentless messages. If we were to have any hope of sifting through the myriad of voices and the philosophies of men that attack truth, we must learn to receive revelation.

00:58:44 Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest miracles between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father, and His son, Jesus Christ, preside over this church in majesty and glory. But in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting and constant influence of the Holy Ghost."

00:59:10 One other function of the Holy Ghost that I love is John 14:26, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." I love this functionality generally. And you, too, have I'm sure experienced this, times when the Spirit's brought to your mind just the right story, just the right teaching, just the right scripture. But I want to throw in just a little editorial aside on New Testament text.

00:59:40 I don't want to over claim, but I also don't want to claim too little for James, for the gospel writers, for John and for



Matthew. I wonder if this particular promise wasn't especially poignant for them. I've not participated in the creation of scripture, but I have sat at the feet of two men I sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators, for many hours with Elder Hales and President Eyring, asking them about events that occurred decades earlier in their life. I think it would be a shame to underestimate the ability of the Holy Ghost to help writers like Matthew and John remember what they need to remember when producing a text the Lord knew would be read by millions and millions of people. What a cool opportunity.

01:00:26 And then here's one other passage about the Holy Ghost and then we'll move on. This is in John 16:8 and I have to tell you it's one that puzzled me and it's because the King James translation, which is my favorite, it's, I think, unparalleled for majesty and power. But I use the other translations to supplement my study. And sometimes they give me critical insights, and they do in this verse. "And when He has come, He will reprove the world of sin and righteousness and of judgment." And that, just reprove the world of righteousness, judgment, I don't get that.

01:01:00 But the word translated reprove here, according to Barnes Notes on the Bible, that I get when I look it up in Blue Letter Bible, says He will reprove... The word translated, reprove means commonly to demonstrate by argument, to persuade anyone to do a thing by presenting reasons. The Holy Ghost will convince a world that's come to doubt the existence of sin, that it's real, that righteousness is real. And that judgment, which has become almost a dirty word, is real. And the kind of defacto articles of faith of the emerging religion of the world, that's find your truth and don't be judgey. The Holy Ghost will help people see now, actually, sin is real, righteousness is real. We will one day be held accountable for the way that we live. These are critical concepts not to overlook. And apparently the Holy Ghost plays a role in helping the world understand and be convinced of them.

Hank Smith: 01:01:54 The Holy Ghost will show you things as they really are.

John Bytheway: 01:01:58 Section 93. Also, I love it in Jacob. Jacob 4:13, I think, "Speaketh of the things as they really are and as they really will be." And I love the really, extra, in there. Because truth is a knowledge of things as they are, as they were, as they are to come. But sometimes it can be so confusing. We need something to show us the way things really are, and that's Jacob 4:13, I think.

Robert Eaton: 01:02:25 And all this yields peace. If we're doing a chemical equation, we'd have an arrow at the end after loving Christ, obeying Him,

having the companionship of the Holy Ghost, the result is peace. I love Sister Camille Johnson's teaching, "I testify that Jesus Christ is relief. Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, we may be relieved of the burden and consequences of sin and be succored in our infirmity." And President Eyring said, "The Savior's invitation to come to Him is an offer of peace." He said, "The gift of peace is given after we have the faith to keep the commandments."

- John Bytheway: 01:03:01 Isn't it interesting how many names we've talked about. The way, the truth, the life. And I remember that, when she said Jesus Christ is relief. Oh, yeah.
- Robert Eaton: 01:03:10 A new name for Him.
- John Bytheway: 01:03:12 Just another name. Yeah.
- Robert Eaton: 01:03:13 "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." And then this marvelous promise in John 14:27. By the way, that first one was from verse 1. Here's just another scripture study technique. Take out the chapter breaks. They were added centuries later and sometimes prevent us from seeing continuity. The Savior has just told Peter that he's going to deny him three times, what a sweet thing to follow that up with. Don't let your heart be troubled. Just believe in me. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," is John 14:27. And then in John 16:33, these things I have spoken unto you that in me you might have peace. In the world, you shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
- John Bytheway: 01:04:07 I have a story about John 14:27. I was a newlywed. My wife and I were in the Marriott Center. This is one of those moments when I could tell you, I bet I could get within feet of where I was sitting, even in that big arena, because I almost came out of my chair when I heard Elder Jeffrey R. Holland say this. And I remember going, "Did he just... What did... That was..." It was so wonderful to me. And it was March 2nd of 1997.
- Robert Eaton: 01:04:40 Back in the 1900s. Wow, John.
- John Bytheway: 01:04:43 Man, can you believe that?
- Robert Eaton: 01:04:44 You must have had the Holy Ghost to bring that kind of memory.

John Bytheway: 01:04:46 I was like a deacon or something. I still remember going, "Whoa, I've never thought of it that way before." But he gave a talk, I think it was called Come Unto Christ. And this was before we had speeches.byu.edu and I had to write to his office and say, "Where can I get a copy of that?" And eventually the book, Trusting Jesus. Or you could go to speeches.byu.edu. But after he read John 14:27, just one paragraph if you guys don't mind, he said, "I submit to you that this may be one of the Savior's commandments." Now, first of all, that made me go, "What? 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,' is a commandment?"

01:05:30 Back to Elder Holland, "I submit to you that this may be one of the Savior's commandments that is, even in the hearts of otherwise faithful Latter-day Saints, almost universally disobeyed. And yet I wonder whether our resistance to this invitation could be any more grievous to the Lord's merciful heart. I can tell you this as a parent, as concerned as I would be, if somewhere in their lives one of my children were seriously troubled or unhappy or disobedient, nevertheless, I would be infinitely more devastated if I felt that at such a time the child could not trust me to help or thought his or her interest was unimportant to me or unsafe in my care.

01:06:09 In that same spirit, I am convinced that none of us can appreciate how deeply it wounds the loving heart of the Savior of the world when He finds that His people did not feel confident in His care or secure in his hands or trust in his commandments." Can you see why I almost came out of my chair? I had never entertained the idea that if I let my heart become troubled or afraid, that in a way I could be wounding the loving heart of the Savior. Like, don't you trust me, type of a thing. I had never considered that before.

Robert Eaton: 01:06:46 The trust in Jesus that comes from real faith leads to peace. We have to worry about so much less when we really trust His promises. Anthony Sweat read on your Easter episode, said that Doctrine and Covenants 19:23 was kind of the mantra for his Doctrine and Covenants class. I love that verse and I think it's a key that helps us understand one of the ways that this promise of peace can be realized in the life of Jesus' followers. "Learn of me and listen to my words. Walk in the meekness of my spirit and you shall have peace in me."

01:07:21 When we follow Christ, we let all sorts of things go. People cutting in front of us in traffic, things that become the source of irritation, frustration, and squabbles, and thus a lack of peace in

our lives, become non-starters if we'll just walk in the meekness of the spirit.

01:07:40 I also find that having an eternal perspective brings amazing peace. I don't want to steal the thunder from your episodes on Acts 4, but I love the boldness and peace that Peter has. It's almost as if he's saying to the Sanhedrin, "What are you going to do? Kill me? Yeah, I resurrect, turns out. Yeah, you got nothing on me." He is bold and full of peace because of what he now knows. When we live life with an eternal perspective, we have greater peace.

01:08:09 I love Abraham 2:16, "Eternity was our covering," Abraham said as they sojourned. When we frame all that happens in life against the backdrop of eternity, we live differently, but I think we also live with greater peace. So much stuff just kind of melts away, that in the moment, seems like such a big deal,

Hank Smith: 01:08:29 Rob, excellent.

John Bytheway: 01:08:33 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Robert Eaton, John 14-17.
- Robert Eaton: 00:07 Years ago I was asked to give a fireside on joy. This was in the pre-Gospel Library day, so I was using the topical guide, and I came across John 15:11. Jesus says, "These things I have spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." I thought, I'll bite. What are these things? What's the antecedent? I want to know. That's changed the way I've viewed John 15:1-10. Again, the chapter breaks came after the fact, so it could be all of John. But let's just read some of those and talk about how these bring us joy. Starting with verse one. John, would you mind reading for us and we'll just dissect these as we go?
- John Bytheway: 00:47 John 15:1, "I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."
- Robert Eaton: 01:03 Let's pause there for a minute. Any thoughts about Jesus as the vine? This is the seventh "I am" statement that's got a nominative predicate following it.
- Hank Smith: 01:11 It's a great analogy, isn't it? If you're a branch and He's the trunk of the tree, that branch can have lots of fruit on it if it's connected to the tree. But if you-
- John Bytheway: 01:22 But that's the only way.
- Hank Smith: 01:23 Yeah. Yeah. If you want to be a branch that's treeless, you're going to be in trouble. You got to stay with the tree.
- Robert Eaton: 01:29 Elder Talmadge says, "A grander analogy is not to be found in the world's literature." I love this insight from Thayer's Greek Lexicon. "Christ calls Himself a vine because as the vine imparts to its branches sap and productiveness, so Christ infuses into His followers His own divine strength and life." He'll be in us.
- Hank Smith: 01:50 Infuses, I like that.

Robert Eaton:	01:52	John. Keep going.
John Bytheway:	01:53	Okay. Verse three. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."
Robert Eaton:	02:09	"I am the vine, and ye are the branches: He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."
Hank Smith:	02:17	I have this talk from Elder Holland, Abide in Me, April 2004. Can't believe it's been that long. Sometimes when I go to look at these talks, I think, "That's not 20 years old." But he says, "Abide in me is an understandable and beautiful enough concept in the elegant English of the King James Bible. But abide isn't a word we use much anymore." We don't text people usually and say, "I'm going to abide here for a while." Elder Holland says, "I gained even more appreciation from this admonition from the Lord when I was introduced to the translation of this passage in another language. In Spanish, that familiar phrase is rendered, "permaneced en mi." Like the English verb abide, permanecer means to remain or to stay. But he says, "Even Gringos like me can hear the root cognate there of permanence. The sense of this is then, stay, but stay forever."
	03:13	I love the idea of you have to be connected to the Savior in order to have fruit. You might say, "I'm going to cut myself off from the trunk of the tree." You might even go, "Look, I'm finally free. I'm happier than I've ever been. I can go anywhere I want in the yard. I don't have to be connected to that tree." But it's not going to take long before verse six comes along, "You're cast forth as a branch and you wither." Connected to the Savior? All grapes. But if you disconnect from Him, you're raisins, soon-to-be raisins.
John Bytheway:	03:46	I love the last part of verse five. "Without me, ye can do nothing." I always love to bring this verse into the discussion when we talk about 2 Nephi 25:23, "After all you can do." Because I remember I sat next to an Evangelical minister once on a plane and he said, "You guys believe in the Jesus of the gaps." I have to admit, my first thought was, "I don't really know where Jesus shopped, but I don't think they had a Gap back then." But he said, "You think you're going to do all of this and then Jesus makes up the gap." It really caused me to think because I thought, "Oh, I think I know where we might get that idea." "You're saved by grace after," as if it's a sequence, "after all we can do."

- 04:36 It really set me out on a search for ... In fact, I went to the index of the Triple Combination and found every reference to the word merits and I went through it. Do we merit our salvation? Type of a thing. Wonderful little journey it sent me on. We rely holy and only upon the merits of Christ. As we go through that verse with my students, what does after all we can do mean? Our friend Brad Wilcox did a talk called His Grace is Sufficient, where he took that phrase apart beautifully. But I always like to bring in this verse. Hey, Christ is there before, during, and after any effort we can make. Because without him, how much can we do? We can do nothing.
- 05:20 I love that it uses that all we can do type. That phrase is right there. Put that with all of those other verses as you ponder and wrestle with this idea. I just wanted to throw that in there.
- Robert Eaton: 05:32 My tag for this concept, John, is called Contemporaneous Grace. Every time I catch a reference like Brad's and others, and there are plenty, by the way, that have helped address this issue, to help us overcome the notion, "I ought just do all the work I can, then collapse maybe a few yards short of the finish line and Jesus will drag me across." But to help us see, "No. No, he's promised to run the race with us, to be there." As a young missionary, I had that old example of a little thing we drew with there's a fall and two steps and then Jesus makes it possible. There's a bridge, so Jesus built the bridge. My implication was, we've got to cross the bridge ourselves.
- 06:15 But as I served in leadership positions in the church and matured in my understanding of the Gospel, I thought not only does He build the bridge, but He helps us walk across the bridge. I don't think any of us could walk across the bridge without His help, and I don't think we can help others effectively. I don't think we can really do much of anything of eternal consequence without being plugged into the vine. I have found the more I ground my teaching, my service, my thinking in the Savior, the more power, the more effectiveness and the more joy there is for me.
- 06:49 A year-and-a-half ago, Elder Stevenson gave instruction at a Regional Leadership Conference I attended. He said 20 years earlier, when he was in a stake presidency, Elder Nelson had visited his stake. In the Saturday evening session of Conference, he had someone draw a tree, complete with roots and branches, and reported to us that Elder Nelson had said, "My teenage daughters were asking lots of questions that I would call branch questions. I realized I was answering them with branch answers and the Spirit nudged me to say, 'I need to

answer them with root answers." Elder Stevenson encouraged us as leaders to teach root truths, core truths, like those found in the first two or three questions of the Temple Recommend questions.

07:31 And then at the end of the Conference, Elder Carl B. Cook of the Presidency of the Seventy made a comment he didn't even remember giving. Because I asked him, "May I use this on the podcast?" He said, "Sure, I didn't remember I said that." But I've loved it. When you focus on the leaves, you burn out. When you focus on the roots, the atonement of Jesus Christ, you are inspired. That's true for me. When I do stuff for Jesus, I do it more joyfully and more effectively. But sometimes programs and success and even trying to do the best of things can take on a life of its own. And if it becomes about statistics rather than salvation, certainly if it becomes about our individual success rather than the Savior, we become unplugged and we lose that power.

08:18 I wonder if that's why Elder Uchtdorf has been so emphatic about making those connections to the Savior. "As teachers, we may speak with the tongues of angels. We may entertain delight, amuse and astound," he said. "But if we have failed in keeping our focus on Jesus Christ, we have missed the mark and our teaching is only a shadow of what it ought to be. Always keep the focus on our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ."

John Bytheway: 08:42 We're tinkling symbols and sounding brass otherwise; we're meaningless noise.

Hank Smith: 08:49 I've wondered if the Savior would use this analogy today. These guys are living around these grapevines. This is something that's part of their everyday life, and it's not something that's part of our everyday life. Rob, you just used the word unplugged. So I've used this analogy where Jesus might say today, "You are the phone and I am the charger. Without me, you are dead. Without me, you are nothing. But with me, you can do incredible things." I've had students label their phone charger Jesus and it reminds them every night when they plug in, "I better be connected."

Robert Eaton: 09:24 I love that.

John Bytheway: 09:25 Oh, Hank, that reminds me of there was an article about Jaren Hall, BYU's quarterback who's now coming up on the NFL draft. But he quoted a bunch of sayings of his father, Kalin Hall, through his life, and one of them was, "Plug into God before you plug in your phone." Always make sure you plug into God



before you plug into your phone. The other one that I just love that is not on topic exactly was about looking for a wife. He said, "I want you to find somebody who is so lost in the Lord that you have to go through Him to find her."

- Hank Smith: 10:01 That's beautiful.
- John Bytheway: 10:03 That is great.
- Robert Eaton: 10:05 One Monday morning my assistants and my wife and I were reviewing the key indicators for the mission. Once again, we'd had far fewer people attend church than we had hoped and we are talking about how we could change that. Naturally, our minds went to tactics we could emphasize. Now, the missionary department had even kindly given us, back then, a Zone Conference to teach about ways to get more people to come to church. Clark Cannon, one of my wise young assistants said, "What if instead we taught them more about the sacrament and the Sabbath day?"
- 10:38 You can get people to come to church by throwing the right-sized rocks at their windows. Too little, they won't hear, too big, you've got other problems, jumping on their bed, by harassing them endlessly with texts, but that doesn't lead to lasting change, abiding change. Abiding change comes from tapping into Jesus Christ and His doctrine. Too often, our instinct is to, as Elder Bednar said in one of his books, "We spend too much time talking in council meetings about behavior we want to change," I'm paraphrasing here, "but not enough time talking about the doctrines that, if believed, would lead people to change that behavior."
- 11:15 I'm grateful for Clark Cannon teaching me in that instance about the power of teaching people about the sacrament and what that means. And then when they love the Savior more and know what it means to Him for them to attend this meeting, they're more likely to choose on their own to attend. All right, verse seven. Let's go back, John, if you could pick up there again in chapter 15.
- John Bytheway: 11:37 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."
- Robert Eaton: 11:43 I just love that phrase, "My words abide in you." I can remember years ago when I had a manual labor job, but I got 10-minute breaks and I got to read something. Whatever I read in those 10 minutes would become my soundtrack. The

question is, what's my soundtrack? What do I read or watch that sticks with me? What am I choosing?

- John Bytheway: 12:02 Treasure up in your mind. "My words abide in you." It reminds me that Moroni, as he was closing out the Book of Mormon, quoted a couple of talks of his father and letters from his father, Mormon. In the Moroni 9:25, he said, "My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto death; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers, and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life," listen to this phrase, "rest in your mind forever."
- 12:38 Now, let my words abide in you. What do you let rest in your mind? Because if you watch the news, if that's going to rest in your mind, do you want the fruit of that? But let this rest in your mind forever. After he had just told him all these bad things were happening with the falling of this civilization, Mormon says, "But let Christ rest in your mind forever." That sounds to me like, my words abide in you, isn't it?
- Robert Eaton: 13:02 What a wonderful link that I'll be adding to my scriptures there, and a great question. What am I letting rest in my mind? Wow. Thank you. All this leads to amazing joy when we let the solemnities of eternity, the merciful plan rest in our minds. When we bind ourselves through ordinances and covenants to the vine, to the source of life and light, we have joy. Sister Jean Bingham taught, "Lasting joy is found in focusing on our Savior Jesus Christ, and living the Gospel is demonstrated and taught by him. The more we learn about, have faith in, and emulate Jesus Christ, the more we come to understand that He is the source of all healing, peace and eternal progress."
- 13:45 "Your sorrow shall be turned to joy, the Savior teaches in John 16:20," which reminds me of Isaiah 61:13, "I'll give you beauty for ashes." "We'll have hard times, but as the Savior says in chapter 16:22, 'Your joy no man taketh from you.'" And then President Nelson has explained that, "My dear brothers and sisters, the joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives. When the focus of our lives is on God's plan of salvation and Jesus Christ and His Gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening or not happening in our lives. Joy comes from Him and because of Him. He is the source of all joy."
- Hank Smith: 14:30 I'm noticing, Rob, in the two chapters we've covered so far, that love comes up over and over. John 14:15, "If you love me, keep

my commandments." Verse 21 of John 14, "He it is that loveth me that keepeth my commandments, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." Down to verse 23, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." Verse 24, "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." And then he continues in John 15:9, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." Verse 10, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I abide in the Father's love."

15:09 Then more in verse 12, "Ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And then even later in this chapter, verse 17, "The things I command you, that ye love one another." Verse 19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Over and over, He talks about this love that He has for the Father and the love that He has for them, and the love that they can show to Him if they keep His commandments.

Robert Eaton: 15:42 47 times in the Gospel of John, He uses the word love. Again, that includes chapter headings. Only 12 in Matthew, seven in Mark, 13 in Luke. It's just another beautiful theme laced mercifully throughout John's Gospel.

Hank Smith: 15:57 You see how much He loves this group who has stuck with Him.

Robert Eaton: 16:02 We're going to get to unity in just a moment with John 17, but that loving one another is key for them to do what He needs them to do. They cannot be pulling each other in different directions. They can't be squandering their time quarreling internally to go take His Gospel message effectively to the world. Missionary companionship can't be quarreling with themselves and have the Spirit with them and teach with power. This love for God, love for the Savior and love for each other creates the kind of unity that is needed.

John Bytheway: 16:35 You alluded to it before. Jesus is coming up on some of the most difficult things. I think if I knew I had something huge and horrible ahead of me, I'd be asking everybody to, "You guys got to help me." Here, Jesus is trying to help them and teach them and prepare them for the fact that He's going to leave. "But I'm going to send the Comforter with you. You guys are going to be okay." I think I'd be thinking about myself.

Robert Eaton: 17:01 John, it's still mind-boggling to me I would think, because there are times when the Savior goes up to a mountain and a place apart. I like to climb and hike, so I love all those nature

references. I've got lots of tags about that justify my getting out and climbing and hiking. This seems like it would've been a good time to go out to a place apart, a mountain, for the evening. But instead, on this final evening of mortality with His apostles, Jesus is teaching and teaching beautifully, powerfully, selflessly, to those whom He has chosen to be His apostles.

17:35 In verse 16 of chapter 15 in John we read, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, that your fruit should remain." And then in the Great Intercessory Prayer that we're about to come to, I'll just jump ahead to verse 18 in John 17, Jesus prays to His Father, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." As you know, one sent from is the meaning of apostle. While I read this, I think I want to know what those Jesus has chosen and ordained today have to say, and I'm going to give it great weight.

18:16 Elder Hales told me this story and he told it in a talk. He wouldn't have told it in a talk after he himself became a member of The Twelve. He was Presiding Bishop when he shared it. His father was an artist, and a member of The Twelve had commissioned a painting and was coming by to pick it up personally. It was wintertime and so Elder Hales went over there to see and maybe shovel the walks, but the walk was already shoveled. He came in, his father who had heart problems, who was not supposed to be shoveling walks, had shoveled the walk. Young Bishop Hales was chastising his father for shoveling the walks when he wasn't supposed to.

18:49 "Robert," he said, through interrupted short breaths, "do you realize an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to my home? The walks must be clean. He should not have to come through a snowdrift." He raised his hand saying, "Oh, Robert, don't ever forget or take for granted the privilege it is to know and serve with the apostles of the Lord." I just like the thought. I shovel the walk for apostles. I show up. They go somewhere to speak, I get a chance to hear them. I want to hear them. I want to underline what they say. I want to dissect it. John, I'm grateful for your blurb on the back of my book, but wow, what a blurb for anything the apostles do. "I have chosen you and ordained you." That's quite an endorsement, for me, for anything that these men teach and write.

19:43 John 17, there are all these superlatives. It was Elder Hales, especially loved this, and 18, 19, he called that the perfect day. He just loved that chapter. But this Great Intercessory Prayer is remarkable. We won't begin to do it justice, but let's start with

verse three. My question for verse three is, if we didn't have John 17 and we are doing a prompt in a class, complete this sentence, "And this is life eternal that ..." fill in the blank, I might've said, "That you get as much good done as you possibly can in any 24-hour period." I would've had a lot of other things that I would've thought of before this, so I'm intrigued by the predicate for that.

20:26 "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. What are your thoughts about that teaching from the Savior? Why does He say that's what eternal life is? What does He mean by it? It's a bit counterintuitive for action-oriented followers of Jesus, like most of His followers are.

John Bytheway: 20:50 It sure sounds like an invitation, doesn't it? It's not a "I'm unknowable, transcendent. You'll never figure Me out." It's more of an invitation, and my mind went immediately to an Elder Holland talk in 2007 called The Only True God in Jesus Christ Whom Thou Has Sent, which I think is the greatest official explanation of our understanding of the Godhead that I've ever heard. This is a great talk, but the invitation to actually know Him and that's what eternal life, this abundant life is. We have a God who wants to be involved. I think that's what Come, Follow Me last year in Old Testament taught me. This is a God who wants to be involved in our lives and wants us to find Him and wants to be found, which was wonderful to me.

Hank Smith: 21:38 When the Savior says, "That they might know thee, the only true God," I noticed that He doesn't say, "That they might know about thee, the only true God."

John Bytheway: 21:48 A few facts here.

Hank Smith: 21:49 Yeah. There's a difference between knowing about someone and knowing them. I knew about John Bytheway, before I knew him, and there's a big difference between knowing about someone, hearing about them, reading something they've written and getting to know them, becoming their friend. I think maybe that's what the Savior was after there, "That they might know thee."

Robert Eaton: 22:12 A relational invitation almost. By the way, in a marriage, when things are going great, it's amazing what you can just let slide. This one spouse backs into the garage and does \$500 damage to the door. It's like, "Don't worry about it. We all do that stuff. We haven't used our insurance in a while. That's what it's for." But

when the relationship is not good, it's amazing how small a thing can get under people's skin and lead to an argument.

- 22:40 Similarly, and I don't mean at all to minimize legitimate questions and concerns and confusions and doubts people might have, but for me, I find the better my relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, the more stuff that once concerned or troubled me just seems to fade into the background and not be that important. The better my relationship is, the more plugged in I am to the vine, the more likely I am to abide in them and walk their path.
- 23:09 Joseph Smith said, "If we start right, it is easy to go right all the time; but if we start wrong, it's a hard matter to get right. There are a very few beings in the world who understand rightly the character of God." And then in the Lectures of Faith, he or Sidney Rigdon or both of them said, "One of the three things we need to know in order for any rational and intelligent being to exercise faith in God unto life and salvation is a correct idea of his character, perfections and attributes."
- 23:35 When my wife and I attended the Mission Leaders Seminar in 2013. By the way, that's like apostles and free chocolate milk. That's got to be the Celestial Kingdom right there. It was just amazing. Elder Holland spoke, and I'll never forget the talk partly because I was there, but it was just so powerful. He said, "There is no point in going on to the other truths we believe if we haven't fixed in our minds and in the minds of those we teach the preeminent role of the Godhead in our doctrine and in our eternal destiny. We are to know these divine beings in every way we can. We are to love Them, draw near to Them, obey Them, and try to be like Them. We can be absolutely certain that it will not go well for the missionaries or for those they teach if we slide past our teaching of the divine. We must not point toward mortal leaders before we have taught and testified of celestial ones."
- 24:27 One of my other favorite missionaries, J.D. Cook, taught after his mission for a year at the MTC and emailed me that if he could do his mission again, he would do more to foster faith in Jesus Christ. He felt like maybe he'd glossed over that as you sprint onto other things, including behavioral changes that are necessary. But it begins, all great things begin with faith in Jesus Christ, President Nelson has taught us. And so I find this declaration of that truth in John 17:3 fascinating.
- 24:58 I just want to highlight two misconceptions. There are so many that we could talk about. Anthony Sweat did on the Easter

episode, a misconception about God maybe being somebody who always makes it easy for us. Elder Holland does, too, one of them from the 2000 talk to a women's conference that John mentioned. "May I declare to you and all others who will hear me that one of the tragedies of our day is that the true God is not known. Tragically, contemporary Christianity has inherited a view of a capricious, imperious, and especially angry God whose primary duty is to frighten little children and add suffering to the lives of already staggering adults. May I unequivocally and unilaterally cry out against that sacrilegious and demeaning view of a loving and compassionate Father in heaven? I wonder if the Savior may not have known even in His mortal years that this would happen. Thus, his plea for the world to know the true God, the Fatherly God, the forgiving and redeeming and benevolent God."

25:53 But then, in a later talk, he addresses a countervailing misconception. "Sadly enough, my young friends, it is a characteristic of our age that if people want any gods at all, they want them to be gods who do not demand much. Comfortable gods, smooth gods who not only don't rock the boat, but don't even row it. Gods who pat us on the head, make us giggle and then tell us to run along and pick marigolds. I think we've got to avoid both of those extremes to have that accurate understanding of God, so that we love Him and it fuels what we do."

26:26 I love President Howard W. Hunter's invitation. "We must know Christ better than we know Him. We must remember Him more often than we remember Him. We must serve Him more valiantly than we serve Him. Then, we will drink water, springing up into life eternal, and we will eat the bread of life."

John Bytheway: 26:42 For our audience, what is intercessory? I think I know about ... Why don't we explain? This has been called the Great Intercessory Prayer. What is that?

Robert Eaton: 26:50 I think of the intervening, interceding on behalf of one. This is the prayer where Jesus intercedes for us, pleads. A beautiful example of His advocacy on the behalf of those who follow Him. Especially as later in this chapter, we hear Him praying for us, those who believe on Him because of His apostles' words.

Hank Smith: 27:12 I have a reference from David O. McKay, said, "This is the greatest, most impressive prayer ever uttered in this world." Wow. We could learn a lot about prayer here, I think.

Robert Eaton: 27:24 We can. What a treat, a privilege to get to sit in on this prayer, this sacred moment. As we read this, it helps us see that Jesus Christ are distinct beings. But Elder Holland has also said, "I now quickly stress that when we have made the point about the distinctiveness of their persons, it's equally important to stress how unified they are and how truly one the Godhead is. I think I'm safe in saying that part of the reason we're so misunderstood by others in the Christian tradition is because in stressing the individual personages of the Godhead, we may not have followed up often enough by both conceding and insisting upon Their unity in virtually every other imaginable way."

28:06 I think there's one other danger in overlooking their unity in this prayer and in reality. Then, I think we overlook the significance of the Savior's invitation, His plea for us to become one with each other and one with Them, even as They are one with each other. We get that in verse 11. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through mine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." Now, I backtrack for just a bit to say, how are They one? Is it because They took a vote and found the middle ground between Jesus and the Father? They're one because Jesus Christ submits Himself to the Father.

28:52 Hank, you pointed this out. I was going to have to count, but you did it for me in your marvelous book about Living the Parables, but I think you said over 100 times in the Gospel of John. You said, "John also features Christ referring to the Father more than 100 times." This is an interesting paradox. In the Gospel of John, we get a grander view of Jesus than in any other Gospel. We see His divinity more clearly, right from the outset. It's what scholars would call high Christology. And yet, we also see His submissiveness to the Father more clearly than in any Gospel.

29:29 In John 14:7-12, 28, 31, the message is, "My Father is greater than I. I do what He asked me to. I do what He sent me to do." That is how we achieve unity with Him and the Father, is that we submit to Him in the very same way that He has submitted to the Father."

Hank Smith: 29:47 Rob, I noticed about this prayer that again, I think we've hit this before today, but He prays a little bit for Himself. He starts out with saying, "The hour has come. I need the power that I had before the world was in order to finish this work and perform this atonement." And then again, the rest of this prayer is about other people, where He prays for the disciples. He prays for



those who believe on Their words, so any disciple of Christ becomes part of this prayer.

- 30:19 Taught me a statistic that five of 21 verses are really about Him and the rest are about other people. It taught me a little bit about how to pray. I've had prayers before where it's all about me and I think, "Oh, my word, maybe I should talk about someone else here for a second so I don't seem so selfish." But when I finish my prayer that it's about me, I should say I'm about 20% done and I've got 80% left to go about others.
- Robert Eaton: 30:47 Again, all this right before he's about to undertake the most difficult thing. But that's also all about others.
- Hank Smith: 30:54 Yeah, it's all about others.
- Robert Eaton: 30:56 And then you and I show up in verse 20 and all the listeners. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." I just love this verse. John, maybe there are others, but this is the clearest example I can think of where Jesus Christ's immortality is praying for us and that just warms my heart, His advocacy there.
- Hank Smith: 31:19 You become part of the prayer, the Great Intercessory Prayer.
- Robert Eaton: 31:22 Now, I continue in verse 21. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." It seems to me the ultimate point of these beautiful chapters, this upper room discourse, is if we're to realize our greatest potential as children of God, our latent divinity to become one with Him, one with His Son, there's only one way to do it and Jesus is that way. We follow Him. We have faith in Him. We come to think and feel and act like him.
- 32:13 We repent when we're not like Him. We bind ourselves to Him as the vine through ordinances and covenants. We let His words rest in our minds and in our hearts. We come to know Him and His father and love Them so much, and we take the Spirit for our guide and submit our wills to Theirs that we become completely united with Them. We become one. 1st John 1:3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." To be invited

into that fellowship, that order, to be invited to become one with Them, that is sweet.

- John Bytheway: 32:59 What I love about this, focusing on being one, is that one is the center of the word atonement, at-onement. How's this oneness going to happen? It will happen through the atonement of Christ. We can be reconciled and be one. I love John 17:15. "I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil." I think there's a certain part of me that thinks, "Wouldn't it be fun if we could just build a lodge for all of our friends and family and go up in the mountain somewhere and bring all of our favorite books with us?"
- Hank Smith: 33:42 Just escape? Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 33:44 And just hide. But we couldn't bless anybody. "A city on a hill can't be hid." Jesus is asking us to be a light and not that we just go hide from this wicked world, but that we manage to live in it and to try to bless the world. I think it's interesting that He would specifically mention in the prayer, I'm not saying take them out of the world, but please keep them from evil. Wow.
- Hank Smith: 34:09 That's awesome. I love how He compliments them in verse 16. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Using prayer to compliment and uplift someone. I don't think I do that as often as I should in my family prayers.
- Robert Eaton: 34:24 John, this is a reminder because sometimes when life's hard and you encounter some conflicts, there's a natural man, natural woman tendency to withdraw, to say, "Fine, I'll just take my ball and go home." Jesus needs us to stay and play, to help make the world a better place.
- Hank Smith: 34:42 Rob, I look at these few verses of John 17:21, 22, 23. Five times the Savior is calling for His followers, any of his followers, to be one. To create, like you said, that kind of unity. I look then at the world, even in the church, even in my own ward, at the division that the adversary creates. It's all about division. It's all about making your point. What did President Nelson say? We demonize and malign people who don't agree with us, and I would think that's the adversary's greatest goal, to create division. You can see it. I can see it even at the university. I can see it in, what major do you have, or where did you serve your mission? Or where do you live, or what kind of car do you drive? Or how many languages do you speak? It's all division. What's your political views? It's the adversary creating division.

- 35:39 I thought of this talk from President Eyring, Our Hearts Knit as One. It's just a simple analogy that he gives, but I think it could be so, so helpful. He says, "Suppose someone asks you what you think of a new bishop. As we get better and better at forging unity, we might think of a scripture when we hear that question. 'And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye should judge, which is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge, ye shall be judged.'" And then he says this, "Realizing that you see others in an imperfect light will make you more likely to be generous in what you say."
- 36:17 "In addition to that scripture, you might remember your mother saying, mine did, 'If you can't say anything good about a person, just don't say anything at all.' That will help you look for what is best in the bishop's performance and character. The Savior, as your loving judge, will surely do that as He judges your performance and mine. The scripture and what you heard from your mother may well lead you to describe what is best in the bishop's performance and his good intent. I could promise you a feeling of peace and joy when you speak generously of others in the light of Christ. You will feel unity with that bishop and with the person who asked your opinion."
- 36:57 "Not because the bishop is perfect or because the person asking you shares your generous evaluation, it will be because the Lord will let you feel his appreciation for choosing to step away from the possibility of sowing seeds of disunity." I've always remembered that. I hear, this talk is 15 years old and I can still hear him giving that. "The Lord will thank you for choosing unity."
- Robert Eaton: 37:23 He is intentional about unity and in his talks, invites us to be intentional about unity. What are the little things that we do that lead us away from that? What are the things that we do that can draw us to that? What an example.
- John Bytheway: 37:40 I've got, in my margin, Doctrine and Covenants 38:27 "Be one, and if ye are not one, ye are not mine." I like to ask my class, if we're not His, what are the alternatives? Because none of them are good, right?
- Hank Smith: 37:58 Yeah. Rob, I'm a big fan of verse 24 where the Savior is finishing His last prayer before going to the garden. He says, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou has given me," it seems like He's talking about the apostles and the disciples of whoever believes on Him through their word, any of those who choose to follow the Savior, "be with me where I am." The Savior is asking His

Father, "It won't be heaven if these people are not there with Me. So let them come with Me." If you've ever wondered about your own worth, John 17:24, the Savior wants you with Him and prays for that. And I think the Father's going to honor that prayer.

- Robert Eaton: 38:40 "Be with me where I am." Hank, I've not focused on that phrase before. I'm highlighting that. I love that notion. Not just post-mortally, but just, where do we stand? Jesus wants us to be standing with Him in turbulent times and always.
- Hank Smith: 38:58 Rob, before we let you go, I think our listeners would be interested in your journey as an educator, as a scholar and a faithful Latter-day Saint. What's that journey been like for you?
- Robert Eaton: 39:09 My journey's been especially a winding road and eclectic, just in terms of my professional career path. A very strange one. A lawyer, an executive, teaching seminaries and institutes. And then being an academic leader over pathway and online. And then being over on online learning and then getting to teach again. What's remained constant for me throughout that, has been that I've tried to make God's cause my cause. God does not need 17 million religion professors or seminary teachers. I have to be so careful to say this is not the path of the righteous, or all 15 of those we sustain as prophets here and revelators would be former religious educators. They're not. But for me, I've been blessed to get to do this and it's been so gratifying to do things of eternal consequence. Along that path, I was really blessed to work with Elder Hales on Return and President Eyring and his biography.
- 40:05 My brother asked me after that, "So you've worked closely with two of these men. Do you think people overestimate how much inspiration there is in leading the church, how much the Lord is involved?" I said, "Well, I met this one guy in Mexico who's testified that the First Presidency met daily with Jesus in the temple." I said, "I think he might." I haven't heard that and nothing to suggest that. But I said, "I think most of us underestimated it." As I've worked closely with them, I think we underestimate that we're too quick to assume, "Well, that's just a relic of their social upbringing, of their culture, of their biases." I have been amazed at those two men, the late Elder Hales and President Eyring. And then I got to interview all of The Twelve and everyone but President Monson. With each of them, I felt the same thing that I feel and that anyone can feel listening to them in General Conference.

40:58 They are chosen and ordained. They are sent from Christ. Even when there are questions I don't have the answer to, I know where I want to stand. I want to stand with Jesus and those He's called and ordained.

Hank Smith: 41:12 Wonderful. Absolutely wonderful. John, what a great day we've had in the Gospel of John.

John Bytheway: 41:18 Yeah, a lot of notes.

Hank Smith: 41:19 Yeah, a lot of notes in my Gospel library app. I loved all the tools Rob showed us there. We want to thank Professor Rob Eaton for being with us today. What a treat. Thank you, Rob.

Robert Eaton: 41:30 Thanks so much for having me. What a privilege for me.

Hank Smith: 41:34 It's been just a treat for us. We want to thank our Executive Producer, the amazing Shannon Sorensen. We also want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And we, of course, remember our Founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're going to talk more about the New Testament on followHIM.

41:52 Today's transcripts, show notes and additional references are available on our website, [followhim.co](http://followhim.co). 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.

42:19 We want to thank our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts and Ariel Cuadra. We also love hearing from you, our listeners.

Alicia Hawks: 42:31 Hi, my name is Alicia Hawks. I am a faithful listener of the followHIM Podcast. I love it so much. I'm a busy mom to five little boys, ages 11 to two. And because I'm in such a busy season of motherhood right now, I don't have a lot of time to dive into the scriptures the way that I used to prior to having kids, the way that I would like to. The followHIM Podcast has been a huge help in gaining insights into the scriptures each week that I wouldn't otherwise have time to gain.

43:01 I feel like it's a really good example of the way that Christ comes to women, just the fact that I can plug in this podcast and listen

to it and gain such powerful insights. I've had so many aha moments and so many moments where I'm running to grab my journal to write down the things that have come to my mind. I feel like this has been a true godsend and I'm so grateful for the work that you all do on this podcast. Thank you so much. Bye.

## WHAT DOES "I AM THE WAY" MEAN?



- Hank Smith: 00:04 Hello my friends. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
- John Bytheway: 00:10 Thank you, Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:12 John, you know the drill. For each week, we just look at a single question for followHIM Favorites. For Come Follow Me this week, we're in John chapter 14, 15, 16, and 17, and our question comes right from the beginning of that, John 14, Jesus says, "I am the way." What did he mean by that? How can someone be the way?
- John Bytheway: 00:33 It's a good question, and I love... The verses that come before it kind of give us this context because Jesus keeps telling them, "I'm going to leave. I'm going to prepare a place for you." Right? "I'm leaving and whether I go..." Let's see, Thomas says, "We know not where you're going. How can we know the way?" And that's where this comes from. "I got to go, I'm leaving, and prepare a place for you." He's been their leader all this time. And Thomas says, "How can we know the way?" And Jesus gives this amazing answer. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." And so I think, oh, so it's like maybe that's a do what you've seen me do, type of an answer. Rely on me, have faith in me, rely on everything I've taught you and use that as your model for how to know the way for life. He's not going to be physically present with them. What do you think when you see that, Hank?
- Hank Smith: 01:24 When he says, I am the way, it's not a direction. I wonder if Thomas is like, "Give me directions."
- John Bytheway: 01:30 It's a manner of living.
- Hank Smith: 01:32 "When do I turn right? When do I turn left? How do I get to where you are?" And Jesus has said, "No, it's not about a GPS, it's about just doing what you've seen me do. Believing in me. Believing in everything that I've told you. I am the way, the truth, and the life." So he expands on what Thomas asks, right?

Because Thomas just asks, "How do I know the way? How do we know the way?" And Jesus says, "Not only am I the way, I am the truth, I am your life. This is how you're going to make it. Focus on me."

- John Bytheway: 02:03 It reminds me of the Doctrine and Covenants verse, "Look unto me in every thought. Doubt not, fear not." That's what you're going to do, Thomas. It doesn't say, oh, find your own way or find your own truth, or something like that. He said, "No, I'm the truth and I'm the way. So keep your eyes right here." I think it's a bigger answer maybe than he expected. "How do we know the way?" "I am the way." It's like, whoa. I'm the way, the truth and the light.
- Hank Smith: 02:28 I like what you said there. Can you imagine Jesus saying find your own truth?
- John Bytheway: 02:33 Yeah. It just what? I think Thomas would still be shaking his head, that's not very helpful.
- Hank Smith: 02:40 Yeah. We can all vote on it. How about that? We'll all vote on the way.
- John Bytheway: 02:45 Whoever has the most money decides what the way is or whoever's the strongest. Nope. I'm the way.
- Hank Smith: 02:51 Yeah, absolutely. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're with Dr. Rob Eaton this week. You're going to love what he has to say on these chapters. And then join us here again for another followHIM Favorites.