



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 Wednesday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

He is risen! Sister Reyna Aburto explores the glory and wonder of the Resurrection and how grief is an essential part of life.

Part 2:

Sister Reyna Aburto testifies that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and offers peace, joy, and salvation unto those who come to Him.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Sister Reyna Aburto
- 00:42 What to expect in this episode
- 01:15 Introduction of Sister Aburto
- 02:15 *Consecrating Your Life Podcast* by Reyna Aburto and Elena Aburto
- 03:03 What is resurrection?
- 05:18 Alma 11:42 Resurrection
- 08:16 President Nelson’s “The Doors of Death”
- 11:36 Sister Aburto’s “The Grave Has No Victory”
- 12:08 Sister Aburto shares the story of her brother’s death
- 19:27 Hank shares a story about his mom’s recent passing
- 23:50 Work continues on both sides of the veil
- 24:58 Sister Nelson teaches ancestors are part of teaching the gospel with missionaries
- 25:46 Moses 4:2 Death and resurrection are part of the plan
- 26:18 Moses 3:16-17 “Choose for thyself”
- 28:01 Moses 5:9-10 Jesus’s sacrifice and agency
- 31:35 Isaiah 25:8, Isaiah 61:1-4 Jesus’s purpose
- 33:20 Luke 1-4, Isaiah 61 Jesus describes himself in the Old Testament
- 35:18 John 11 Jesus raises Lazarus
- 37:00 Jesus prepared his followers for his death
- 39:09 President Nelson teaches about the witnesses of the resurrected Jesus
- 41:00 Jesus teaches one by one and appears in the Americas
- 44:56 Hank shares a story about the temple and Jesus
- 47:12 Peter as a witness of Jesus Christ
- 48:26 Elder Wirthlin “Sunday Will Come” and John Hilton on followHIM
- 51:48 *Finding Strength in the Lord: Emotional Resilience*
- 52:41 Sister Aburto shares a story about dancing with her father
- 54:09 “Mourning with Hope” by Hank Smith
- 57:25 Grief doesn’t have a timeline
- 59:27 End of Part 1 - Sister Reyna Aburto

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Sister. Reyna Aburto
- 00:06 President Nelson on seeing reunions on the other side
- 00:49 John shares a story about the BYU Testing Center
- 05:07 Sister Aburto shares her experience working with special witnesses of Christ
- 06:27 Sister Aburto shares the importance of sharing insight in councils
- 09:07 Letting go of pride
- 11:18 Elder Anderson shares revelation is scattered among us
- 12:45 Speaking at the right moment
- 14:14 Seeking the will of the Lord

- 15:07 President Menlo Smith, “Bring a recommendation”
- 16:27 Giving our lives in service of Jesus Christ
- 17:42 Bringing our best selves to serve and don’t complicate things
- 20:21 Serving with humility
- 21:15 Holy Week and Sister Sheri Dew
- 22:33 Elder Stevenson “The Greatest Easter Story Ever Told:
- 25:06 Sister Aburto shares her testimony about the Resurrection and Atonement of Jesus Christ
- 32:56 End of Part II– Sister Reyna Aburto

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Biographical Information:



Reyna I. Aburto was sustained in April 2017 as the second counselor in the general presidency of the Relief Society, the Church’s organization for its six million female members ages 18 and older.

Personal Life

Reyna I. Aburto was born in Nicaragua to Noel Blanco and Delbi Cardoza and married Carlos Aburto of Mexico in the Jordan River Utah Temple in 1993. They are both converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and they have three children.

Reyna I. Aburto says her husband, Carlos, is her “best friend” and her “biggest support,” and they enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren.

She says two major incidents from her childhood greatly impacted her life: surviving an earthquake that destroyed her home and killed her older brother, and living through a period of civil unrest in Nicaragua in the late 1970s. Through these difficult experiences of loss, uncertainty and fear, she learned relationships, family, love and faith are our most precious possessions.

Reyna I. Aburto attended Universidad Centroamericana, where she studied industrial engineering for four years, and holds an AAS degree in computer science from Utah Valley University.

In 1989, after going through a difficult time in her life, she was invited by Latter-day Saint missionaries to attend church in California. She was hesitant at first, but recalls feeling safe and at home the moment she stepped into the meetinghouse. A few weeks later, at age 26, she was baptized. She says she has “never stopped marveling at the beauty of the gospel,” calling her membership in the Church a huge privilege and gift.

Her family attended Spanish-speaking congregations until 2013, when they began attending their neighborhood English-speaking ward, and she has served extensively in the Relief Society, Young Women, Primary, Sunday School and Scouting organizations in her ward and stake (diocese).

She served on the Primary general board from 2012 to 2016, where her responsibilities included coordinating resources for children in the Church with disabilities, involvement in the Scouting program, improving Primary web content and providing trainings to Church leaders in the United States and Mexico.

Professional Life

She has worked in the language industry for more than 25 years, balancing work, family and Church responsibilities, and now owns a small translation business with her husband.

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Life after Life



GUEST: REYNA I. ABURTO

- Hank Smith: 00:03 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my marvelous co-host John Bytheway, and our guest Sister Reyna Aburto. John, let me talk to you first here. It is Easter here at FollowHIM. When Easter comes to your mind, what do you think of, John?
- John Bytheway: 00:21 I always think of the song He Has Risen, that's like the Christmas Carol of Easter.
- Hank Smith: 00:25 Right.
- John Bytheway: 00:26 I always think of that. Happy morning, Easter morning.
- Hank Smith: 00:29 I think of springtime and color, everything coming back to life. Everything that looked dead is coming back to life. Sister Aburto, we're so glad you're here. What are we going to look at today? What do you want to go through?
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 00:42 Well, today we're going to talk about how the Resurrection is such an essential part of the plan of salvation. Also, we are going to talk about how to have a healthy perspective on grief after a big loss in our lives.
- Hank Smith: 00:58 I'm really looking forward to this because of both of those reasons. One, the joy that comes from the Resurrection. How can it be joyful if we don't embrace, or at least experience the grief, the darkness? The light means so much more when you've sat in the dark for a while. Now John, we've never had Sister Aburto on our podcast, but she is not new to any of our listeners. We better introduce her though because we introduce all our guests.
- John Bytheway: 01:25 That's right. I'm sure a lot of our listeners are excited and thinking, "I've seen her before, and I remember a conference talk she gave." Sister Reyna Aburto was born in Nicaragua. She's married to Carlos. They have three children and three

grandchildren. Reyna studied industrial engineering in Nicaragua, holds a degree in computer science from Utah Valley University. She's an Institute Instructor, she owns a translation business with her husband, and she served as the second counselor in the General Relief Society presidency. As a member of the Primary General board, right now she's serving on the Correlation Materials Evaluation Committee at Church HQ. I've always wanted to say HQ, that just sounds cool. Reyna is a member of several governing boards. She's the author of Reaching for the Savior. I have that book right there. I'm excited to let people know about a podcast that she has with her daughter called Consecrating Your Life.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 02:21

Yeah. By the way, she's right here with me. Elena is her name.

John Bytheway: 02:26

Did you say it's for young adults? For everybody, but emphasizing young adults?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 02:32

Yes, trying to help them see that everything good that we do to build the Kingdom of God on the earth, we are consecrating our life.

Hank Smith: 02:41

I am looking it up right now, John, on my Apple Podcasts. I can see it right here. So all I have to do is click on it, and I can hit follow, and now I am following the Consecrating Your Life podcast, Elena Aburto and Reyna Aburto. There's 49 episodes here to look at, John, all five star reviews. This is going to be great. Sister Aburto, let's jump right in. I'm going to read from the Come, Follow Me manual. "The ancient apostles were bold in their testimonies of Jesus Christ and his Resurrection. Millions of people believe in Jesus Christ and try to follow him," I like that part, "Because of their words recorded in the Bible. Yet some people might wonder, 'If Jesus Christ is really the Savior of the world, then why were his eyewitnesses limited to a handful of people in one small region?'"

03:27

"The Book of Mormon stands as an additional convincing witness that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, manifesting himself unto all nations and offering salvation to all who come unto him. In addition, the second witness also makes it clear what salvation means. This is why Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and all the prophets labored so diligently to graven these words upon plates, to declare to future generations that they too knew of Christ and had a hope of his glory. This Easter season, reflect on the testimonies in the Book of Mormon that the Savior's power is both universal and personal, redeeming the whole world and redeeming you." Wow, that is fantastic. Sister

Aburto, it is Easter at FollowHIM. Where do you want to take us?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 04:15

Well, I think that we can start with the definition of what resurrection is, so it's clear for us. I went to the scriptures, and this is what it says in there. It says, "Resurrection is the reuniting of the spirit body with the physical body of flesh and bones after death. After resurrection, the spirit and body will never again be separated." Isn't that beautiful to know? "And, the person will become immortal. Every person born on earth will be resurrected because Jesus Christ overcame death. Jesus Christ was the first person to be resurrected on this earth. The New Testament gives ample evidence that Jesus rose with his physical body. His tomb was empty, he ate fish and honey. He had a body of flesh and bones. People touched him, and the angels said he had risen. Latter-Day revelation confirms the reality of the Resurrection of Christ and of all mankind."

05:12

I think it's such a beautiful blessing that we have to be able to read all these testimonies about him. In fact, in the Book of Mormon, in Alma 11, we read something that Alma also says. Starting in Verse 42, he says, "Now, there is a death which is called a temporal death; and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death, that all shall be raised from this temporal death. The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time; and we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing even as we know, and have a bright recollection of all our guilt." I think this is such a beautiful passage of scripture because it tells us that everything will be restored to its perfect form.

06:04

Then he says, "Now, this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every thing shall be restored to its perfect frame, as it is now, or in the body, and shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, to be judged according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil." So it's beautiful to think about this, that everything will be restored to its perfect frame, not even one hair will be lost. So all of those people that probably are starting to lose their hair, or maybe someone who has a illness that they have been suffering for a long time and they cannot see the end of it, or if you may have lost a limb or something in your body, we actually lose energy and strength as we age.

Hank Smith: 07:05 Reyna, you said that those of us who might be losing our hair, I've noticed there's three of us on this podcast and one of us has amazing hair. Maybe John was like, "And, who is it? I can't tell." I think you're absolutely right. I'm in my middle 40s, my spirit still feels young, but then this body, all of a sudden the knee starts to hurt and I think, "Wow, this might hurt forever."

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 07:33 Yes. It gives us hope that we are going to be restored. I love that word, restoration. We know about that word in the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, which means that things will be renewed. They will be made new again.

John Bytheway: 07:48 Yeah, I like that the Resurrection is so much more than a healing. When we talk about, Lazarus was raised from the dead, so his body and spirit were reunited, but the definition that you read is never again to be divided. So it's a renewed body, and I just love the idea of resurrection is a restoration, like you said. It's the ultimate healing. We're so grateful that the Savior knows how to heal, and even can heal death. Gives us such hope, all of us.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 08:16 Yes. In fact, I found this beautiful thought from President Nelson from a message that he gave I believe in 1992 or something like that. It's called The Doors of Death. He says, "The very laws that could not allow a broken body to survive here are the same eternal laws which the Lord will employ at the time of the Resurrection, when that body shall be restored to its proper and perfect frame. The Lord who created us in the first place surely has power to do it again. The same necessary elements now in our bodies will still be available at His command."

08:55 "The same unique genetic code now embedded in each of our living cells will still be available to format new ones then. The miracle of the Resurrection, wondrous as it will be, is marvelously matched by the miracle of our creation in the first place." Isn't that beautiful how he connects the process of our creation to the process of our resurrection? He's saying that the Lord is going to use the same elements, and the same power, and the same genetic code that he used to create us. I think this is such a beautiful image that he's giving us.

Hank Smith: 09:33 This reminds me of something Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin said. I'm sure both of you remember him. This is way back in 2001. I never thought I'd say that, way back in 2001. This is what he said. He said, "In my younger days, I loved to run. Although it may be hard for you to believe it, I did." Those of you who don't know what President Wirthlin looks like, you can go back and look. He shuffled up to the podium at General Conference. He

says, "Although it may be hard for you to believe it, I did, and I did win a few races. I'm not so fast anymore. In fact, I'm not sure how well I would do in a race if the only contestants were members of the Quorum of the Twelve."

10:12 He says, "My ability to run is not so swift now. While I'm looking forward to that future time when, with a resurrected body, I can once again sprint over a field and feel the wind blowing through my hair, I do not dwell on the fact that I cannot do it now, that would be unwise. Instead, I take the steps I can take. Even with the limitations of age, I can still take one step at a time. To do what I can is all my Heavenly Father now requires of me, and it is all He requires of you, regardless of your disabilities, limitations, or insecurities." So I think you're right, Sister Aburto, we look forward to that day, but we realize we're not there yet.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 10:53 Yes. But we have that hope, and that's what we're talking about today, about the hope of the Resurrection, to know that we'll be reunited with all our family members who have passed, and we will be in a perfect state. It's going to be different.

John Bytheway: 11:07 President Nelson said, "If He can create us once and our bodies are miraculous, then He can create us again." So even though we may be breaking down in this way and that, there's that hope that, "Oh, he can do this again, and all things will be made new again." I love that Alma taught that so specifically in Alma 11, that you read. It gives a lot of people a lot of hope. I remember a lot of my balding seminary teachers always quoted that one and laughed about it. Do you remember that, Hank?

Hank Smith: 11:36 Yeah. Now Sister Aburto, I have to say that I did not know you were in the manual for this week's lesson when I invited you to come on the show. So it's just a wonderful coincidence that under the ideas for learning at home and at church they say, "To see also Reyna I. Aburto, The Grave Has No Victory." I went there and I looked at this talk, and you tell a story about when you were nine years old, and what happened to you then. I was hoping maybe you could tell that story here.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 12:08 Christmas was coming. You can imagine, at that age it's magical because you know that it means that special day in which we feel that special spirit. It really permeates throughout the whole world, everywhere in the world people feel different around that time of the year because we are all thinking about the Savior, about his birth. I was really anticipating the date that Christmas will be here, and it was just a few days away. I went to sleep that night. It was December 22nd of 1972. Actually, I

had a brother and a little sister. She was just a baby, but my brother slept... His bed was right next to mine.

Hank Smith: 12:52

How old was he? You were nine, he was-

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 12:54

He was 10 and a half. We were very close. We went to sleep and then, all of a sudden, I woke up and I felt like I was in the middle of a nightmare. Everything was so dark that I couldn't move. I was trapped from the waist down. Then I honestly thought that it was a nightmare. I could hear people screaming in the distance and asking for help. Then I realized that one of them was my mother actually, that was asking the neighbors to help her so she could take us out from the rubble. I don't know how much time had passed. It was probably an hour or two. I really don't know, because you lose track of time when you're in a nightmare. Then they were able to take me out.

13:29

Actually, what saved me is that I have a piece of furniture similar to this. It was a drawer and I think it created that triangle of life that they talk about, and that's why I was able to breathe. They took me out to the street. Maybe half an hour later, I really don't know how long, they took my brother, but he was already dead. Of course, everything looked so different. Our house just came down instantly because it was made of adobe. It was a house that my grandparents had built years before. It took me a while to realize that it was real, maybe a few days. I was in shock, and I couldn't believe what had happened. In a way, I think that being in shock is a protection so our mind can process reality.

14:14

I even remember that when Christmas finally came, my aunt gave me a present that she had for me. When I saw that present, I didn't know what was happening, and I told her, "Why are you giving me this? Is it my birthday?" She said, "No, it's Christmas." I totally forgot that it was Christmastime. I was in such a state of... I don't know how to call it. It was just a shock. Back then, we were not members of the church and I didn't know many things that I know now. As a nine-year-old, of course, I had all these questions. I really wanted to know where my brother was, because we were very close. We were good friends, and we grew up together, but I didn't know where he was. It was about a year after he died that I started having this... I don't know how to call it.

14:59

It was probably like a daydream. It was like wishful thinking. I would think about him. I will imagine that he would come to our door and then I will open the door and he will tell me, "Guess what? I'm not dead. I'm alive, but I was in a place where I could

not really come to you. But now I'm back, and I will never leave again." That thinking, having that image and that hope, helped me cope with the grief and the pain of losing my brother at that early age. This happened many times, that I would sit down in the living room and stare at the door, hoping that would happen. I never told anybody about that. I grew up. When I was 26, I was already living in San Francisco, California. I joined the church. I never told anybody.

15:46 It was probably around 40 years after that earthquake that one day, around Easter time, I was in my kitchen doing the dishes, and then I started thinking about the Resurrection, and what the Lord has done for us. Then I started thinking about him. His name is Noel. It finally hit me, and I realized that experience that I had, it was really a revelation. It was a way for God to assure that little girl that I will see my brother again one day, and that he's still alive. He's in a place where I cannot see him right now, but one day we will be reunited again, and then we will never be separated.

16:31 It finally hit me that it was not a silly thing. I never told anybody because I thought it was silly, but then I realized that it was actually a tender mercy from the Lord to me at that young age. After I gave that message in General Conference one day, it also hit me that having that experience actually prepared me and allowed me to witness, to the whole world, that I had that hope, that I have that assurance, and that I know that one day we will all be resurrected, including those family members that have left already, including my brother Noel. I know that I will see him again because we have witnesses in the scriptures. The spirit has testified to us of this truth, and I believe that it will happen.

Hank Smith: 17:24 Did you ever think, here's this nine-year-old girl suffering this tragedy, and then years later she's testifying to millions? That was right during the pandemic, right? That conference?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 17:36 Yes. It was in April 2021. We were still in the middle of the pandemic. With the pandemic, what happened is that the church actually went and hired several TV channels, and all different kinds of media to be able to broadcast the General Conference to the whole world. That session specifically was Sunday morning, and it was Easter Sunday. That particular General Conference edition went to so many people around the world. They keep adding more every time. It keeps going to more corners of the world, but that one was special because it was Easter Sunday. I don't know if you remember, but all the people that spoke in that session, except for of course for

President Nelson, we were all from different continents and countries. We were all foreigners, we were not US born. Even the ones that offered the prayers. It was very special. Very special to be part of that.

- Hank Smith: 18:34 That is fantastic. Knowing the story now, and picturing that little nine-year-old girl in the middle of that earthquake, it really touches me. I want to read your closing quote. The Grave Has No Victory, April '21 General conference you said, "I testify that through the redeeming Atonement and glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ, broken hearts can be healed, anguish can become peace, and distress can become hope. He can embrace us in his arms of mercy, comforting, and empowering, and healing each of us." It meant a lot to me then, but it means more to me now.
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 19:09 I really felt embraced of the Savior with that experience, and all the things that I learned from that. The fact that, years later, he extended his arms of mercy to me, inviting me to join the church, that was the greatest gift that I could have received years later.
- John Bytheway: 19:27 I love the story. Think how different life would be if we didn't have that expectation of, this time is temporary. We will have our loved ones again. Life would be so different and dismal, but there's such hope because our separation is temporary. How that must have changed your life. I've had loved ones die and I've had so many dreams that suddenly they just walked in the house. To hear you think about watching the door, oh my goodness, what a difference it makes to know, this is the middle part. There's more coming, and it gives us something to look forward to on the other side.
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 20:04 Yes, for sure. For sure.
- Hank Smith: 20:06 John, with that word expectation, you think a lot like Joseph Smith. He said, "More painful to me are the thoughts of annihilation than death. If I have no expectation," I like that word, John. It's not a hope. It's not a wish. "If I have no expectation of seeing my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and friends again, my heart would burst in a moment and I should go down to my grave. The expectation," there it is again, "of seeing my friends in the morning of the Resurrection cheers my soul and makes me bear up against the evils of life. It is like they're taking a long journey, and on their return we meet them with increased joy."
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 20:45 Wow. I love that image. I can see myself embracing all of them, each of them. What a beautiful feeling. Yes.

Hank Smith: 20:55 My mother died recently, and I walked over and put my hand on her hand as she lay in the casket. You both have had this experience, where you think, "That's not my mom. That's not my friend. That's not my loved one." One day, we have the expectation that hand will be warm again, and we'll reach out in love. I have to tell you that a couple of nights before my mom passed away, we were talking. She couldn't talk very loudly, it was just a little bit of a whisper. But she asked me, "What do you think it's like to die?" I said, "I don't know. I've never done it." But I told her a story that came to my mind, and I bet both of you have heard this. This is President Nelson at RootsTech years ago, talked about his great-grandfather appearing to his grandfather.

21:52 I didn't have the story with me, I just had to paraphrase it for my mom, but I looked it up here. He says, "When my grandfather Nelson was a young husband and father, just 27 years old, his father died. Then about three months later, his father, now deceased, came to visit him. But, the date of that visit was April 6th, 1891. Grandfather Nelson was so impressed by his father's visit, as you might imagine, that he wrote it down in his journal." Then President Nelson quotes directly from the journal, "I was in bed when father entered the room. He came and sat on the side of the bed. He said, 'Son, I had a few minutes, and I received permission to come and see you. I'm feeling well, son. I've had very much to do since I died.'"

22:38 He asks, "What have you been doing father?" He said, "I've been traveling with Apostle Erastus Snow. I received my commission to preach the gospel. You cannot imagine, son, how many spirits there are in this world that have not yet received the gospel. But many are receiving it, and a great work is being accomplished." A little bit later in their conversation, the son asks Father, "What is it like to die?" He says, "Oh, it's just as natural to die as it was to be born. It's like you passing through that door," he pointed to a door. Well, I told my mom that story. She closed her eyes and said, "Oh, that sounds nice," and then she ended up passing away the next day.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 23:21 That's so sweet.

Hank Smith: 23:22 One other thing that you might like, just out of nowhere as I was sitting by her, she said, "You know, I hope your dad is young when I see him. He was so good-looking when he was young."

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 23:32 Aw, that's cute.

Hank Smith: 23:32 I thought, "Well, I hope so too, mom. I hope so too."

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 23:41 She was already having that expectation. She had that expectation that she was going to see him. That's beautiful. That's very sweet.

John Bytheway: 23:50 I love the idea that the work goes on, on the other side, and that he was busy. It makes me tired to hear that. I guess we're not floating around playing harps, but we're busy. My dad, before he passed away, this was a few years before he passed away, I can't remember the exact occasion, but he asked me to give him a blessing. I got to give my dad a blessing and when I said, "Amen," he turned around and looked at me and said, "John, I think I'm going to Hell." I was like, "Dad," And he said, "To teach." I was like, "Oh, okay."

Hank Smith: 24:24 That's pretty good. You got me there.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 24:29 Yes.

John Bytheway: 24:30 So he's in the Hell spirit prison mission right now.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 24:33 Yes. Okay.

John Bytheway: 24:34 He and my mom are the office couple. They're having a great time. But I'm sure that the work goes on, and it sounds like it's vigorous, and they're engaged and doing wonderful things. Probably for that, I think they expect us to mourn. But it's so nice to know that they're involved and they're doing wonderful things. It's nice to have that expectation.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 24:58 Yes. That reminds me also, I think that same RootsTech, Sister Nelson actually said that she always tells the missionaries that when they're teaching someone, that when they're teaching a family, it's not just them in that room, but also the ancestors of that family or that person, and the ancestors of the missionary are present there. All of them are trying to help bring that spirit of Elijah, help those people feel that spirit so they can accept the gospel. I thought that was so beautiful. Then it made me think about my brother Noel, I was thinking maybe he helped me also soften my heart to the gospel when it was my turn. That was a beautiful thing that she said. It's real that they are closer to us than we think.

25:46 Even beginning with the counsel in Heaven, we read about that in Moses 4 when the Lord God says, "Behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me--Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." Then he decided to send Jesus Christ, which is his

Beloved, so he could redeem us. It was from the beginning that all of this plan of salvation was already there from Heavenly Father. Death and resurrection were part of that plan.

26:18 If we go to Moses 3, when Adam and Eve are in the Garden of Eden, we read in Verses 16 and 17 that the Lord God told them, he commanded the man saying, "Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself for it is given unto thee. But remember that I forbid it for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." He gave this commandment not to eat of the tree. Heavenly Father gave them the option. They could choose. They had their agency and he respected it. But he tells them that if they eat of the fruit, they will surely die, which means that they will become mortals. That was all part of that plan. Then we know that they eat of the fruit, they became mortals.

Hank Smith: 27:11 Reyna, are you telling us we signed up for this? Is that what you're saying?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 27:19 I guess so. Yes. It was a decision that they made so they could have children, and they could be on this earth, and we could be mortals. Death is part of that. It's not an afterthought. It was part of the plan from the beginning. Now, if we go to Moses 5 and we read that part when we know that an angel came to them and asked Adam why he was offering sacrifices, we read in here that it says, "And the angels speak, saying this thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the only-begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth, wherefore thou shall do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore."

28:01 The sacrifice of the Savior, that was a symbolism of that. Then he says, "And in that day, the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son saying, I am the only-begotten of the father from the beginning, hence forth and forever. That as thou hast fallen, thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will." From the beginning, this was part of the plan. I just love these words from Adam and Eve, where they rejoice in knowing that the of plan of salvation was going to pass. That day, Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth saying, "Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression, my eyes are opened. In this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God."

28:55 Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad saying, "Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient." Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters. Again, they just rejoice knowing that this plan had started, and that they will be able to be part of it. I'd love to think that everything is connected in the premortal world. The plan was presented, then we had the Creation, and then we had the Fall, and then we came to this earthly life, to this mortal state, and then we're going to die, we're going to resurrect because of Jesus Christ, and then we will be judged, and then we'll receive a degree of glory.

29:47 All of this is called the plan of salvation, the plan of happiness, the plan of mercy, the plan of redemption. The restoration is just part of it, and it's necessary. For it to happen, we need to die first. So, it's all connected. We see this also, beautifully, in the temple. When we go to participate in an endowment ceremony, the plan of salvation is presented to us, and we understand the important role that Jesus Christ had in all of it. That is essential part of it.

John Bytheway: 30:22 I love the idea of knowing we are in a fallen world and we have mortal bodies that are going to have problems, and get sick, and have maladies, and have all sorts of aches and pains, and that's part of it. It's nice to know that, and then to know there's a purpose for all of this, and it's temporary. I like that you read that. I like to share these verses sometimes at marriage seminars because... Listen to Adam, "Because of my transgression, my eyes are open. In this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God." Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad to say, "Were it not for our transgression, we never should have had seed, never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption and eternal life," which God giveth unto all the obedient. She sees the broader, "We did this together." I like that Adam's thinking of himself and Eve's going, "This was the two of us doing this." I don't know if you'd ever noticed that before, but it makes me smile a little bit to see.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 31:24 It's beautiful that they actually counseled together. They made the decision together, and it's beautiful to think about that. We can apply that in marriage, and in every relationship. I would like to read in Isaiah 25:8. He says, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the

earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." Then again in Isaiah 61, this is one of my favorite passages of scripture, because he's telling us what the Lord will come to do.

32:04 When we read the first four verses, he says that, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," and this is a prophecy about the Savior," Because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."

32:59 This is such a beautiful passage that is telling us what the role of the Savior is, that he comes to mend, to give us beautiful ashes, and to give us glory even from this mortal state in which we are right now. There is hope. There is hope for better things to come because of him.

John Bytheway: 33:20 I love those verses. Luke 1, we have the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, and John the Baptist. Luke 2, we have our beautiful Christmas story. At the end, Jesus increased in wisdom and stature. Luke 3, we had Jesus's baptism. Then in Luke 4, Jesus goes home where he was brought up, and he goes to the synagogue, it says, "As was his custom." I've always thought, "If you could pick one verse for the Old Testament to describe what the Savior does in his role, what would you pick?" I wouldn't even know what to pick. Then I say, "We don't have to because Jesus chose the verses." He chose Isaiah 61, and he went to the synagogue, and the minister handed him a scroll.

34:07 One of the questions we've got to ask our scholars, Hank, is did he pick the scroll or did they hand him one? I don't know. But he opened Isaiah. In verse 18, this is Luke 4. You read Isaiah 61, and this is where he reads it again, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me," Messiah means anointed one, "To preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted." Of all of the things the Savior could have emphasized, he could have said something about justice, or law, or commandments, but he came to say, "I came to heal broken hearts." Isn't that beautiful?

34:44 Then he gave the book back to the minister, sat down, and they all waited for him to make a comment on it, which was the custom, as I understand it. He just said "This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears." What a moment when he's like, "That's me. I've come to heal the broken-hearted, preach deliverance to captives, recovering sight to the blind, set at liberty them that are bruised." So I'm glad you brought that verse up, 'cause I'd say that's the Savior choosing the verse out of the Old Testament to describe his mission.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 35:18

Yes, and he has the power to do all of that. He indeed has the power. Then we read about his life in the New Testament, and all the miracles that he performed, and then we know that towards the end of his ministry, he starts preparing his apostles and followers for his death and resurrection. He explains to them, but they don't understand. Then we read about this beautiful story of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, and how the Lord loved them so much. But then, as the Lord is in a different city, Lazarus gets sick and he dies. A word is brought to the Savior, but he waits a few days to come back.

36:01

Then when he comes back, Martha comes to him first. In a way she's telling him, "If you had been here, this would not have happened. My brother will have not died." Then I look what he tells her. He says, "Thy brother shall rise again." When I read this, I think about my own brother, my grandma, and my father, and all of those that have passed away. He's telling us that they will rise again. Martha says, "I know that he shall rise again in the Resurrection at the last day." Then Jesus said unto her, "I am the Resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

36:46

He has a similar interaction with Mary, and then he performs that miracle that he brings Lazarus to life again. That was the symbolism of his own death and resurrection, what happened to Lazarus. Then we know that not too long after that, the Lord goes through his suffering in Gethsemane, and he's imprisoned, and he's judged, and he's crucified, and then he died on the cross. I can't even imagine how his followers felt at that point. It must have been so hard for them. Because even though he tried to prepare them, I don't think they were prepared. Then we read about what happened after he died, that they had the desire to minister to him even in death, after he was dead.

37:33

Joseph of Arimathea, he actually begged Pilate to give him the body, and he actually goes and takes him down. Even Nicodemus comes and he brings oils and spices because he

wants to help prepare the body. Joseph takes the body to his new tomb that he had just carved from rock mountain. The women, we read in scriptures, it actually says that they had ministered to him and they had followed him. They wanted to know where they would put the body because they wanted to go and prepare the body after the Sabbath, and they did that. They waited the whole day for the Sabbath and then, early in the morning the next day, they bring all these spices and these oils to prepare the body.

38:17 That's when they realized that he's not there, that the tomb is open and he's not there. They go and they tell the apostles. A few apostles come and they also witnessed the fact that the body was not there, but everybody leaves, and just Mary Magdalene stays. She was weeping right by the tomb. Then a man comes and she thinks this is the gardener. He asks her why she was weeping. I love this part because, if we think about it, the Lord already knew why she was weeping, but he actually let her express her feelings, he let her mourn. I think that's beautiful to think about that. Then from that point on, the Lord actually appeared to many, many people. There are so many witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

39:09 In this book from President Nelson that I have that is called, Teachings of Russell M. Nelson, he actually lists all the different witnesses that actually saw the resurrected Christ. For example, he says that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then he appeared to other women, and then two disciples that were walking on the road, and then he appeared to Simon Peter, and later that evening he appeared to 10 apostles. 8 days later he appeared again to the apostles, and this time Thomas was present. Then he appeared to 11 disciples at the Sea of Galilee. Then he spoke to 11 disciples on a mountain in Galilee. Then he was also seen by 500 brethren at once. After that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles. So many appearances that he had.

40:02 Then of course, in the Book of Mormon, we know that he appeared to the Nephites by the temple. It says here that at least 2,500 souls actually heard him, his voice, and felt the nail marks in his hands. The modern witnesses have attested to the Resurrection of the Lord. Joseph Smith first saw the Savior in the sacred grove in the Spring of 1820. Then 12 years later, the Savior again revealed himself to Joseph and Sidney Rigdon, and then again in the Kirtland Temple in 1836. It's wonderful to think that so many were witnesses of the resurrected Christ, and that we can actually read their testimonies and their witness that they saw him. That is the greatest evidence that he

is the Messiah, that he is their Savior, our Savior and Redeemer, that he came to redeem us as part of that beautiful plan of salvation and redemption.

John Bytheway: 41:00

I'm glad you mentioned that. I think it's fascinating. We're in a Book of Mormon year, so how was the Resurrection in the Book of Mormon understood by those people compared to the mortal Christ ministering there as we've talked about, Lazarus and Mary? Here, the resurrected Christ comes to them, like you said, 2,500 people. He invited them to come up one by one and feel his hands, and his feet, and his side. I got out a calculator once and I thought, "How long would this take?" I just wondered what kind of a day that was. If I did my math right, if each person took 10 seconds of the 2,500 people, 6 people then in one minute, what I got was 6.94 hours if each person took 10 seconds. If each person took 15 seconds... Think about that, his hands, and his feet, and his side, what an invitation. Could have stood far and said, "Can everyone see me? Can you see from where you are?" But he wanted every single one of them to come up one by one, which teaches us something, doesn't it?

42:08

If each person took 15 seconds, exactly 10 hours. Imagine a community that has 2,500 people who have that kind of witness of the Resurrection. I like to think, "What would that do to a community?" The answer is 4th Nephi. The answer is, there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of the Lord. What an amazing invitation for him to make sure every person could come. It took about four generations for things to start to go bad again. I've always wondered if that's because... I have no basis. This is just Bytheway guessing. I have no memory of my great-grandparents, but I do remember my grandparents. Can you imagine if your grandparents said to you, "Hank, I was there. I was there on that day, and I waited in that line. I touched his hands, I touched his feet, I looked in his eyes?" You would never forget that.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 43:12

Yes, it's something to think about. In a way, the Lord is still inviting us to come to him one by one, because he's able to minister to us one by one also. Each of us can receive this testimony and this witness that he's the Savior. It's beautiful to think about the fact that he took all that time and that he didn't mind. He actually let everyone come to him, actually thrust their hands into his side, and feel the prints of the nails in his hands. The result, like you said, it was that these people were faithful for generations.

- John Bytheway: 43:50 Long time ago, probably before Hank was born, I donated a kidney. I think my incision is maybe 10 inches long or something, all around my left side. I haven't showed a lot of people my scar. The Lord desired to actually invite them to come and touch the wound in his side. He really wanted them to know. The level of kindness and trust, there's a level of intimacy there, to come and see the wound in my side. Wow, that's amazing that the Savior of the world, the creator of the world would give that kind of an invitation. I love the Book of Mormon story of how they witnessed their Easter. The Book of Mormon has a really cool Christmas story in Samuel the Lamanite, 3 Nephi 1, and it has a really unique Easter story too in that part right there.
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 44:46 Yes, and they're both connected in such a beautiful way, because the reason why he was born is because he needed to come and die, and resurrect after that.
- Hank Smith: 44:56 This discussion reminds me of, there was one time I was sitting in an endowment session. I was in the very back. Both of you know that if the session is quite large, you're going to be waiting back there for quite a while as people go to the veil. As I was sitting there and I was going, "Oh man, some people are going to be in their cars, and back home, and watching football by the time I get up there." Then I thought about that 3 Nephi 11 that you both brought up. I wouldn't have minded watching people go have their experience, and I wouldn't mind waiting for my experience. How similar are these experiences, thrusting your hand into his side? Right now, you said feeling the prints in his hands. I thought, "As people have their individual experience there, instead of being impatient, I can think how wonderful it will be when we do that in the flesh, when we do it with the actual Lord."
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 45:55 That shows the importance of every person because we go there first to perform those ordinances in our behalf, our personal endowment, but then we do it for our ancestors, and we do it one by one, and each of them needs to go through everything and their names need to be said out loud because each of them is important. Each of us is important. That shows that it cannot be rushed. It has to be done one by one, one by one.
- John Bytheway: 46:24 I remember doing a baptism for the dead once for someone that I knew the backstory for. I was on a spiritual plateau for a couple of weeks after doing that baptism for the dead. The thought occurred to me, every person has a story every time we go. It might seem like just a name, but they have a story too,

and they're important, and the Lord wants them to have it one by one. It's a fun thing to think about. Maybe we'll get those stories one day.

- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 46:57 Yes, it's a realistic thing to think about that all of them probably had a difficult life, or something difficult in their lives, and they need to be healed from that, and they need to come to the Savior in a more complete way.
- Hank Smith: 47:12 Reyna, as you mentioned, the many witnesses of the Lord, I thought of Peter specifically. When he's with the Lord, he is awesome. But, he has some down moments. Then after the Savior dies, Peter gets stronger. Where you would think, "Well, he's supposed to get weaker. His Lord has died." But yet, Peter goes back to Jerusalem, and he's bearing his testimony to the very people who had Jesus killed. Isn't that what a witness of the Resurrection can do? The story only makes sense if they really saw a resurrected Lord. Why would you get stronger rather than weaker at this down moment? You said, "They must've been devastated," and I'm sure they were. But, something turned that all around.
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 47:53 Yes, they had the knowledge. They knew, at that point, that he was certainly the Messiah and that he was a God because he was able to resurrect.
- Hank Smith: 48:03 That same thing can happen to us, as you've been telling us.
- John Bytheway: 48:06 Hank and Reyna, you probably remember this, somebody talked about that Saturday in between the events of the crucifixion on Friday and the Resurrection on Sunday, that long Saturday, and how we go through those Saturday times of maybe some confusion, some mourning.
- Hank Smith: 48:26 That was John Hilton III. Elder Wirthlin gave the talk, Sunday Will Come. Reyna, you said earlier that it's important to talk about grief around Easter time.
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 48:37 Yes, because I think that all of us have experienced or will experience death, someone that we love or someone that we know, even our pets sometimes. We all have experienced loss. In a way, we feel that pain and it's real, and we should not be ashamed or feel guilty if we have this time of mourning because it is part of who we are. These are emotions that show that we actually loved the people and the person that has passed away. President Nelson, in that same talk called Doors of Death, he actually says, "Irrespective of age, we mourn for those loved

and lost. Mourning is one of the deepest expressions of pure love. It is a natural response in complete accord with the divine commandment, thou shall live together in love insomuch that thou shall weep for the loss of them that die."

49:32 "Moreover, we can't fully appreciate joyful reunions later without tearful separations now. The only way," and this is so profound, "To take sorrow out of death is to take love out of life." So the only way in which we will not feel sadness every time someone that we love passes away is if we don't love them. It's part of that love. The interesting thing is that we all mourn or grieve in a different way, and we need to respect how people grieve or mourn. We cannot tell them to do it a certain way, or to stop doing it because it's just part of that relationship that they have with that person. They love them, and they miss them.

John Bytheway: 50:17 When you mentioned that Reyna, there was one of those messages, little movies the church made. My memory is a father that lost a child was having such a hard time mourning and asked the Lord to take that pain away. Does this ring a bell? The Lord said, "I could, but I'd have to take away the love. I'd have to take away the good memories that you have, and that you cherish." I thought, "Wow, what an interesting way to look at it. Mourning is natural, it's appropriate." What did Alma the Elder tell them at the Waters of Mormon as part of coming to the fold of God was to mourn with those that mourn, and comfort those who stand in need of comfort. I thought that was so interesting. Can you read that line again, Reyna?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 50:59 Yes. It actually says, "The only way to take sorrow out of death is to take love out of life." That comes from President Nelson, so profound. Sometimes when we are trying to comfort someone that probably has had a loss, we think that we need to tell them something to make them feel better, or that we need to fix the situation. I think it's a natural tendency that we have that we want to help people, and we want to fix whatever is wrong. When that child gets hurt and we just put a bandaid on, we want for them to feel better. But sometimes, in those situations, I think that it's better not to try to say anything, maybe to hug them and tell them that we love them, that we feel for them, and that we are there for them if they want to talk about it. We need to let people take their time to mourn and to grieve for that loss that they had.

51:48 Actually, the church has this wonderful resource. It's called Finding Strength in the Lord: Emotional Resilience. It's one of those self-reliance courses that the church has. It actually has a

section about mourning and about grief. It talks about that almost everyone will experience grief at some point in their lifetime. Like we were saying, whether due to the death of a loved one, or another loss or big life change such as losing a job or relationship. Then it talks about the different stages that we go through, different emotions that we feel as we mourn, and it talks about denial, or anger, or bargaining, or sadness, or acceptance. Many times it doesn't go in certain order. Many times we think that we already accepted the loss, but then we can go back again to the same feelings that we had in the beginning.

52:41 But the important thing is to realize that mourning is a normal reaction from us because of the love that we feel. It doesn't really matter how long ago the loss happened. Just the other day, it was a Saturday morning, it was probably two Saturdays ago, we were listening to music in my house. All of a sudden, all this came from the time of my father, he passed away 31 years ago. As I was listening to that music, I could picture myself dancing with him, because he actually taught me how to dance. I was thinking, when I go to the other side of the veil, I hope that I can dance with my father again. Then tears came running down my face. He died 31 years ago, but I still miss him because I still love him. It doesn't matter if it's been one month, two months, three years, or 50 years, that feeling of loss is still there. We need to accept our emotions, and cope with them in a healthy way, not to make anybody feel guilty because they are mourning.

John Bytheway: 53:43 Isn't it wonderful that we have an expectation of a reunion? Hank, I know it comes up on my feed. There is a podcast called Y Religion. Hank, I think you just recorded one with them, called Mourning with Hope. Can you tell us about that?

Hank Smith: 53:59 Yeah, I was actually on the other side of the microphone, which was really weird, John. I was like, "I'm not supposed to talk. You're supposed to talk."

John Bytheway: 54:07 Did you miss me during that recording?

Hank Smith: 54:09 I did. I was looking around, missing your companion. A number of years ago, I wrote a chapter in a book called Mourning with Hope. So the Y Religion team decided to highlight that article, and just released that. That would really be special to me, if anyone wanted to listen. After this episode, of course, you can just go to YouTube and go to Y Religion? The letter Y, not Why Religion. You might get some other videos if you type in why religion.

John Bytheway: 54:37 Other podcasts.

Hank Smith: 54:38 This is the letter Y Religion. That chapter was the culmination of a couple years study that I did on how Latter-day Saints deal with death. It's not that we don't mourn. That would be a myth. That would be a mistake to say, "Oh, my testimony means I don't need to mourn." So, I called the chapter Mourning with Hope. The followHIM podcast is a supporter of the Y Religion podcast, so we hope everyone will go check that out. A lot of our guests that we've had on our show have been on that one as well.

55:07 Reyna, I was going to tell you, as you talked about mourning with those who mourn, back in 2014, my mother-in-Law, Marlene Savage passed away. We were all devastated. She was this incredible grandmother and mother. We were sitting there on a Saturday a couple of days after she passed away, and we were in shock. There, but not there. Well, all of a sudden I hear my lawnmower start up and I'm like, "What is going on?" I went out on the side door, and I looked out on my lawn, and there is my father, who has since passed away, mowing the lawn. He saw me and waved, and I waved back. I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Helping." He mowed the lawn, he edged the lawn, and then he got in his car and drove away. He didn't feel like it was time for him to come inside and fix it. There's nothing he could have said that would've fixed it. What would Alma call that? Bore our burden that it may be light?

John Bytheway: 56:09 Well, that reminds me of the story Jesus says to the woman, "She hath done what she could." I remember a story... Hank, do you remember this one? Reyna? It was repeated in General Conference, but somebody who came and grabbed everybody's shoes, and shined up all of the shoes before the funeral. The kids, the adults, came in quietly, shined the shoes, and left.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 56:30 That's beautiful. To think that we can actually minister to people without saying a word. Your dad was loud with the lawnmower, but he didn't say a lot. He did it quietly. Yes, that is great. Going back to the story of Lazarus, even the Savior wept because when he saw Martha and Mary's sadness. They were sad because they loved their brother, and the Savior cried with them, he wept with them. He knew how to mourn. That's why it is a natural thing. It's a normal thing to do. If someone is listening to this, and they feel bad because they are mourning, that shows you loved that person that left, and that is part of this life. But there is hope, because we mourn with hope, and there is a difference when we have that hope that we are going to see them again because of the Savior.

Hank Smith: 57:25 I was talking with a good friend the other day, and her father had passed away a couple of years ago, and she said, "I should be better by now. Everyone else has gone on. Everyone else is doing great, and I should be better." I like what you've said here, Reyna, let the process take its course for you personally. It's going to look different for everyone.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 57:45 Yes. We can be certain that the Lord is willing to help us heal from that, and that he has the power to help us, but that doesn't mean that we are going to stop missing the person because it's a big loss. They are not with us. We want to have them with us, but they're not here. It's hard to wait sometimes, but we have that hope, and that's what needs to help us. That's why having all these scriptures and these witnesses that talk about this, and give us that assurance, it actually happened that the Lord was resurrected. Because of that, each of us will be resurrected. I love reading the words of the prophets in the scriptures. I'm always amazed to see how well they understood the plan of salvation, and how well they understood the role of the Savior, and how each of them are always inviting us to come to Him so we can actually be also his witnesses.

Hank Smith: 58:40 That's fantastic. The first witness of the Resurrection, Mary Magdalene, so distraught, weeping. The first thing he says to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" In the sense of what is about to happen, that is such a perfect question. "Why are you weeping?" Then her whole world changes, our whole world changes, when he calls her by name.

John Bytheway: 59:03 Everybody's world, yeah.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 59:05 It was a great gift that he gave us. Part of that work of our Heavenly Father to bring about the salvation and eternal life of all of us, it's just part of that perfect gift that he gave us. And everybody will receive that, as we read in the scriptures. Everybody, every person, will receive that gift of resurrection from the Savior.



5 Years at Church HQ



GUEST: REYNA I. ABURTO

- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Sister Reyna I. Aburto on Easter.
- Hank Smith: 00:06 I was thinking about that the other day when my mom passed away that I thought, "Oh, I would like to have her back," and then I thought, "I don't think she'd like to be back," because what President Nelson said once something to the effect of if you could see the reunions on the other side, it would mitigate the way you feel. I would love for my mom to be back, but I think she'd say, "What are you doing? I was talking to my mother and my grandmother," and seeing these wonderful people from her history and just history in general. I thought "President Nelson's right". I wouldn't want to take her from those experiences.
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 00:48 Yes.
- John Bytheway: 00:49 Speaking of mortality and what we go through, I remember as a student at BYU and Hank, this is when you were probably in elementary school, but they have this building, they still have it called The Testing Center and it's the Heber J. Grant Building and in my day you went there, you took your number two pencil. I've actually taken tests with this. You take your number two pencil, you bubble in everything and you go there to take tests and some things occurred to me once, I've never seen anybody in the testing center about to burst with joy because you're taking tests.
- 01:24 It's not fun, and somebody that always had a really bad cold and nasal congestion always seemed to find a seat right next to me when I was taking a test. Somehow they knew. I remember once I took a Statistics 222 test in there, I got there at 7:00 AM, I left at noon. By the time I left, I didn't care what I got, but the funny part about the testing center was for me is when you leave, there's usually a group of students there. You're handing in your answer sheet and they're feeding it through a computer. Now, Hank, does the word Dot Matrix Printer mean anything to you?

Hank Smith: 02:01 I think I saw it in a museum once.

John Bytheway: 02:04 Right. So it makes a loud noise.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 02:07 Petrified.

Hank Smith: 02:07 Petrified.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 02:08 Petrified, right?

John Bytheway: 02:10 Yeah. Indiana Jones discovers one in Egypt, I think, but when it prints, you hear it. A laser printer sounds the same no matter what it's printing, but a Dot Matrix is like... You hear the paper feed.

Hank Smith: 02:23 Okay, yeah.

John Bytheway: 02:24 So there's usually seven or eight people standing there giving in their answer sheets and there's three or four student employees there that start feeding them into different machines and you don't know whose results are printing out. What you do know is that if you ace the test, all it will print is your name, your student number, and your score. But if you missed one, it'll print, okay, number two, your answer B, correct answer D. Number four, your answer A, correct answer C. Number 16, your answer B... When they start printing, everybody's just holding their breath and you'd hear one tick, tick, tick name and then it would be... And everyone's just, "Oh, oh, stop. Oh, make it stop."

Hank Smith: 03:10 Don't let that be mine. Don't let that be mine.

John Bytheway: 03:11 Right. Then they rip it off and then they call your name in front of everybody, "This way, John." That's mine. Many times I remember grabbing it and walking out because everybody just heard that. Maybe you've heard what Boyd K. Packer said about testing because at first you're thinking, "I am glad that wasn't my test." Now think with your spiritual ears, have you ever said that? I have. I see people and think, "How are they doing that?" President Boyd K. Packer said once, "There's more equality in the testing than sometimes we suspect," which is a remarkable statement that I'm still chewing on. Once you get out of the testing center, there's the fullness of joy, but usually in the testing center it's not there, but you have an expectation that someday you'll be done with these tests and with Dot Matrix Printers in general.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 04:06 Yes. That also reminds me that everyone goes through hard things, John, and sometimes we kind of take turns and that's why we need to always keep that hope in our heart and also to try to help the people around us because one of the apostles once said also, there is a big chance that people around you, everyone is carrying a burden, a big burden at the time. And we need to be willing to help each other, to minister to each other and to bring each other to Christ so we can all receive his healing. I like that image that you painted even with the sound effects.

John Bytheway: 04:45 Now it seems so funny because everybody was thinking the same thing when you heard it print. You're like oh my goodness. And then it goes to the second page, you'll be like, "Oh."

Hank Smith: 04:59 If they called my name, I'd be like, "I don't know who that is."

John Bytheway: 05:01 I don't know. I just look around, I wonder who they're looking for.

Hank Smith: 05:07 I'll come back later when there's no one here. Reyna, we've been talking here about witnesses of the resurrection and I think our listeners would be interested because you spent five years in the Relief Society General Presidency where you were around special witnesses, the apostles or special witnesses of Christ. Would you mind telling us a little bit about that experience?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 05:32 It was actually very humbling to be sitting on the same tables with those special witnesses of Christ. We had regular meetings with them. We belong to different councils and committees that were chaired by different apostles and every time I was present in one of them, I couldn't believe that I was actually there. I was always pinching myself. But I think that one of the things that I really enjoyed the most was to actually get to know them on a personal level and to see how different they are. They all have different personalities. Some of them are more quiet or more shy and some of them are very funny and it is beautiful to actually see that they are regular people in a way, but they have a special calling and they have a special mantle and they have all this experience that they have gained through serving the Lord with all their might and strength and you can feel that power.

06:27 I had the opportunity, like I said, to belong to different councils and one of them was the Temple and Family History Executive Council, they call it. It's usually chaired by an apostle. For many years when I belonged to that council, it was Elder Bednar who

chaired that council and then we also had Elder Stevenson and Elder Renlund in there. What we will do in there is to look at the things that will come to the first presidency for them to approve because everything that has to do with temples has to be taken directly to the first presidency. I had an experience that shows how wise they are. This was towards the beginning of me attending that council. I remember that we received a long document. It was probably 20 pages that we had to read before coming to the meeting. And they asked us to actually bring feedback if we thought that there were things that could be improved or changed a little bit or things that could be added to it so it would be more clear.

07:24 And because I'm a translator, that's my profession. I have read and reviewed a lot of text in my life. So for me it's very natural to read text and to find things that I think that could be improved. In that document, I probably had 25 changes that I wanted to suggest. Some of them were really minor, like editorial changes, but maybe four or five, six of them were a little bit more about the actual content. When it was my turn to actually share my comments with the council, I apologized from the beginning. I said, "Okay, I have about maybe 20, but I'm just going to talk about five because I don't want to take a lot of time because some of them are just editorial and I can send them later." I started mentioning one and then there was some discussion around the table about what I said, and then I mentioned another one and I was feeling a little bit nervous because I was like, "I think I'm taking too much time of it," and I was apologizing in a way and I was like, "Okay, two more. I won't take that long."

08:25 And then Elder Bednar looked at me and he said, "Sister Aburto, please stop apologizing. We want to hear what you have to say. Don't apologize, please." I mean he said it in such a sweet way, but then he made me feel part of that council. In a way he was telling me, "Your voice is important here." And I saw that over and over in so many settings that I was in which we were counseling together trying to find the Lord's will in a collective way. Trying to give our best offering to the Lord. It was a great lesson for me that I didn't need to apologize, that I needed to follow the spirit and say what I thought I could say.

09:07 And something that I learned also during those years is that when I say something in a council, I put that on the table and I let it go. It doesn't belong to me anymore because really it was the Spirit bringing thoughts to my mind and letting me be part of the conversation and giving something to that table and then let it go and don't take it personal. If for whatever reason the

council thinks that it's something that doesn't need to happen right now or that it can wait for later, I learned that sometimes we think that things need to happen in a way that we think they need to happen. We shouldn't have an agenda when we come to those councils.

Hank Smith: 09:47

I think you've hit a weakness of mine here, Reyna, which might be to attach a bit of my own emotions to an idea I bring, and if it's not taken by the council and they don't run with it and love it, if it falls to the side, I might get my feelings hurt. I might be a little offended.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 10:06

That's why I think it helps to have that mindset from the beginning. You are trying to receive the revelation beforehand if you already know what the agenda is, but you should not bring this mindset that, okay, they're going to do what I say because I'm right. I don't think that's what the Lord wants. He wants you to come there in that setting in which we receive revelation with a humble heart and just a desire to contribute the best way you can without having to impose your ideas. They should not be your ideas, they should be just feelings, thoughts, promptings that the Spirit is giving you to help with whatever you are discussing. I think that we need to have a different mindset that it helps a lot when we look at things differently.

Hank Smith: 10:52

Reyna, I think you've taught us a profound lesson here, because here's Elder Bednar in your example, special witness of Christ, yet in a council, so you wouldn't think, "Oh, here's the person that knows everything, so I'll sit and listen and do what he says." Like in our old ward councils, we look at the bishop and go, "Well, you're the guy with the keys, so we'll just do what you say." Where here's Elder Bednar, a special witness and yet counseling.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 11:18

Yes. And I saw so many times that he will first ask everyone what we think about something and then at the end he would probably say how he felt about it, but it was not like we are going to do what I think. It was a collective contribution. Everybody contributed. Elder Anderson said once, "Revelation is scattered among us." When we each bring that little offering that we had because of the promptings or the experiences that we have had in our life or because of things that we have seen as we traveled around the world, literally we each brought something to it and then something better comes out of that.

11:57

We had a few occasions, maybe two or three times during those years in which we actually didn't have an agenda and he told us, come prepared to council together and then he will ask a

question related to temples and to the things that were happening at that moment. If you think about COVID, all the temples had to be closed for months and that never happened before. To start opening them little by little and having these protocols that every temple needed to meet in order to open again, it was amazing how revelations came from heaven. We received that heavenly help to be able to talk about things and those were very sacred. They were so sacred because you could actually feel the spirit just testifying that it was a gift from heaven.

Hank Smith: 12:45 Since we have you here, Reyna, on a side note, let's say we have a young women's president listening and she has an idea at ward council but she won't interrupt. How do you do that?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 12:56 I think that if we try to be in tune with the spirit and I had to actually practice that many times, not only with apostles, but even in ward councils and different councils and even at home because we council together at home, we need to make sure that we wait for the right moment. If someone is speaking and they are sharing an idea or expressing something from their heart, you wait for the right moment, you raise your hand or if you see that they're moving onto a different subject, you say things like, could I say something related to that? You make sure that you are seen and that they know that you have something to say.

13:32 And I think that also it is very important how we present our ideas. Instead of saying, "Well, this is what I think," we could say, "Could we consider maybe doing this? Have you thought of maybe that? or an option could be, or maybe we could think about this." There are ways of saying it so it doesn't sound like you are imposing your ideas like I said. I think that there is an art and we can actually put it into practice and try to learn it so we don't sound like we are trying to rule that council and that also helps us so we don't take it personal if like you said, they don't run with the idea.

Hank Smith: 14:14 I think this ties into Easter and the Resurrection actually quite well because you said earlier this council is seeking the will of the Lord. If you truly believe there is a resurrected Lord, you're going to come to that council with that in mind.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 14:32 Yes. The idea that we are trying to help build the kingdom of God on the earth and that we are trying to prepare the earth for his second coming and that's what should be in our heart. It's not that, oh, I think that having that activity is the best idea in the world and we need to have it because I think so. This is what

we need to eat in the activity because of this or that. You know what I'm saying? Sometimes we argue about things like that that don't really matter. Have you had those experiences in the past?

Hank Smith: 15:01

Here's what needs to happen.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 15:03

Yeah. It's a different spirit when we come with that attitude.

John Bytheway: 15:07

My beloved mission president Menlo Smith is probably close to the same age as President Nelson, really, he was wonderful this way. He put such an expectation on us. It's kind of like that brother of Jared's story, what will you that I should do for you? President Smith, if you came to a meeting, he would say, "Never come to your boss with a problem. Always come with a recommendation." And he would want us to wrestle with it because that's where the growth comes. I always loved that approach that you have a calling, you've been set apart. You've been given Priesthood authority whether you're a young woman in a class presidency or a young man in a quorum, have you prayed about it? Have you wrestled with it or are you just coming to the bishop and say, "Tell us what to do Bishop." And that's what I appreciate about what my mission president taught me was let people lead and then we can discuss that the way you talked about.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 16:05

Feeling that power with those special men that have been called by God is something very almost tangible and you can see that they're trying to bring people to Christ. That's really all that they're trying to do, every one of them. And they are actually giving their life literally until their last breath into this work.

Hank Smith: 16:27

I think Elder Holland was asked once, maybe this is just an internet story, would you give your life to the church and he said, "I think that's what I'm doing."

John Bytheway: 16:34

I am. That's what I'm doing.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 16:40

Yes, literally that's what they're doing. They're such a great example to us of what the law of consecration is. They're really consecrating their lives and we can do the same thing in our own sphere. Sometimes we think that consecration is just the time that we spend in our calling or reading the scriptures or praying, but really it's how we live our life. It's 24 hours a day, even the eight hours that we sleep, that's part of that consecration because we need to take care of our bodies so we can keep serving the Lord. It's the 24 hour thing. The apostles,

they're in their ministry until they die, but we are also in our own ministry until we die.

Hank Smith: 17:18 What does Lehi say to Jacob? You'll spend your days in service to your God. I'm excited to know that's what I signed up for. So there you were Reyna and excuse me if I keep asking questions, but there you were, you're probably eating lunch occasionally with these special witnesses. You're probably having conversations with these special witnesses. What did you learn there?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 17:43 It was wonderful to see the different personalities and I always tell people, you will never guess who I think, of course, this is my personal opinion, who I think is the funniest of all of them. And I honestly believe that is President Oaks. When you are in a very relaxed setting like in a dinner table, he makes everybody laugh over and over. And even Sister Oaks has to say like I do to my husband, okay, I think that's enough. But I think that is cute because they are human beings. They're like all of us. They all have different personalities. Each of them is amazing. That reminds me also of another story. This happened when that announcement was about to be made about the adjustment from home teaching and visiting teaching to ministering, I believe it was in April, 2018 that they announced that.

18:35 The week before General Conference usually the general leaders they have a few days of meetings all day with leaders that come from all over the world. We have general authority 70's and some even area 70's that come and they are trained. They explain to them all the things that are happening and even the announcements that they're going to make in General Conference. President Ballard stood in front of us and he told us about the announcement that was going to be made on Saturday, but he told us, and I will never forget this because he was very calm. He spoke slowly. He was so wise and then he told us, "Okay, we're going to make this announcement, but let me tell you, I'm very worried. We members, we complicate everything and I'm afraid we are going to complicate this ministering."

19:26 He asked us to help the members understand that it's not complicated at all. That it's all based on the two great commandments which are to love God with all our heart, mind and strength and to love our neighbor like the Savior loves us. And that if we base it on love, then we will not complicate it. It was such a beautiful teaching from him that we need to simplify it. I'm sad to say that I think he was right. In many cases we have complicated it but we shouldn't. I hope that everybody will

have heard him asking us to help everyone focus on what is important, which is to try to serve each other, to account for the Savior's sheep, to watch for each other and to bring people to Christ. That's the bottom line of everything. We are trying to bring people to Christ and that's what ministering is, is to help people feel the love of God through us.

Hank Smith: 20:21 Fantastic. Reyna, thanks for that. You have listeners all over the world, many who maybe have seen an apostle in person once in their lives or maybe never. To hear you talk about this interaction you had up close and personal with these special witnesses of the Lord, it's faith affirming for those of us who aren't there. Did you ever think that was going to be you?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 20:43 Never, never. I will wake up every morning thinking, okay, I am going to Salt Lake. I'm going to meet with this brother and this apostle, and I could not believe it. Yes. But at the same time it is simple. The way that things are done in church headquarters are simple. The basic elements of looking for revelation, praying, doing everything in the name of Christ, bringing people to him, that was the basic goal that we all had, how to bring people to Christ.

Hank Smith: 21:15 Which transitioning back to Easter is what it's all about. I listened to a talk from Sister Sheri Dew, John, this is your friend. I claim Sheri's my friend, but I think she tolerates me. She really likes John though. Sheri said, this is in the 2016 BYU Easter conference. She was with an evangelical friend in some sort of meeting. They were rescheduling their next meeting. And he looks at his calendar and said, "Well, next week it's holy week, so we can't meet then, we'll have to look past that." And Sheri said she made the mistake of saying, "Wait, you don't work at all next week?" He looked at her like she was some sort of infidel, like, are you even Christian?

21:58 She said, "I quickly changed the subject to, well, what do you have planned? What do you have planned for Holy Week?" John, he had a full week of church activities and family activities to celebrate Easter. So with that in mind, John, Reyna, how can we do that as Latter-day Saints? We love and revere the Lord, and at Christmas time, I think we do a great job of showing that to our families and our friends, our neighbors, our ward, and I think it's happening more and more, don't both of you? That Easter is becoming more emphasized.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 22:33 That reminds me of a recent talk from Elder Stevenson that is called the Greatest Easter Story Ever Told when he talked about his family. They are really trying to celebrate Easter in a more

Christ-centered way and to do it more purposely. I love that message because it shows that we are all trying to do better. Sometimes we think, oh, he's an apostle, he has it all figured out. But he actually told us that he's trying to do this and he invited us to also try to do it. I think that we could all be more deliberate. We can be more purposeful in trying to remember Christ more during that week and trying to probably read the scriptures just like we do during Christmas. He actually mentioned that we could go and read the scriptures of things that happened during that week, so we are ready to celebrate Easter Sunday when we actually remembered the day that the Lord was resurrected and that amazing gift that he gave us through that.

- John Bytheway: 23:33 I'm really glad we're talking about this because Elder Stevenson, it wasn't the first talk, someone else gave a talk about this without Easter, there is no Christmas at all. I'm excited to really try to do that. I think one way, Hank is to take that holy week apart what happened each day and be able to talk about that and remember try to make that a bigger deal. What is it that President Howard W. Hunter said, "Without the Resurrection, the life of Jesus is a litany of wise sayings and some unexplainable miracles, but no ultimate triumph." This is everything. I've been thinking this whole time. We're talking about Job's question. If a man die, shall he live again? and Easter is the answer to that. Not just that Jesus would live again, but all of us will live again and that's an Easter question, not a Christmas question. I'm just glad we're talking about it. I don't have the answer, but I'm going to do better this Easter.
- Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 24:34 I think that we can all pray to know what we can do better in our own families. Easter Sunday is when we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection, but why to stop there? Why couldn't we after that day actually go and read about the resurrected Christ and all the appearances that he made. His followers, and then go to the Book of Mormon and talk about what he said to the Nephites and you continue with that probably then we could hit Christmas at that time and then we can start all over, right?
- John Bytheway: 25:04 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 25:06 Reyna, before we let you go, we have listeners all over the world, and by the way, wherever you are, come on to YouTube and tell us where you are. It's a treat, isn't it, John? To read those YouTube comments and to find out where you all are, it's pretty incredible to us. It takes our breath away really to hear from you. These listeners, many of them, like we said earlier, are suffering because mortal life has all sorts of challenges. Why

don't we just glean from you and your wisdom with these thoughts about Easter and the resurrected Lord, what might we say to bless the lives of those who are listening?

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 25:43

I would like to testify that even in those darkest moments, the Lord Jesus Christ is by our side and he's trying to reach out to us to help us. We just need to turn to him and reach out for his help because his hand is always extended towards us. And there are times in our lives when it seems like everything is dark and all these clouds, heavy clouds are on top of us and we cannot see the end of that darkness, but I testify to you that just by thinking about Jesus Christ, about all the gifts that he gave us and turning to the scriptures, because that's the place where we can actually get to know him better, when we read about his life, his mission, the miracles that he performed, that can actually give us the hope that we probably need.

26:32

But I would also like to tell people that there are times in which that sadness is more than we can bear many times it's because we may be suffering from something that needs special care and that we should not be afraid or ashamed to ask for help. We should look for a safe person. Of course, we talk to our heavenly Father. He's the first safe person that we have in hand, and we express to him our feelings and we tell him how we feel and we ask him questions and we plead for his help. But we also look around us and try to find someone who listen to us and that we know that they're not going to judge us and just express our feelings, and sometimes by expressing our feelings we may feel better. An important thing also is that we need to also try to be a safe person. Each of us can be a safe person for someone who probably needs to reach out and get out of their chest, all those burdens that they're carrying.

27:30

In some cases we may even need professional help in dealing with maybe depression or an anxiety or things that we are going through, and there is nothing wrong with that. Because if we have a pain in a certain part of our body, we go to the doctor and we ask them to fix it. President Nelson has talked about this, Elder Holland too, there's nothing wrong in admitting and realizing that we may need help from someone who can help us with our emotional and mental health. Of course, the Lord is the ultimate source of healing and hope and peace, but has also allowed us to develop that science and all that knowledge that allows us to help each other when we are in need of help.

John Bytheway:

28:14

Absolutely. I'd go back to that beautiful verse from Isaiah 61 that Reyna read to us and that Jesus read when he introduced himself, when he went back to Nazareth. That he's here to heal

the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives. I love that that is what he would focus on himself and we can take him seriously when he says that's what he's here to do. When I think of Easter and I think of all the greatest victories, imagine conquering death and sin, but for everyone.

28:52 When Jesus first came, many thought he was a different kind of Messiah, that he was more going to deliver them from the Romans. He's like, "We've got bigger problems than the Romans." Death and sin, like mortality. For him to conquer that for everybody. Let me read from my favorite Easter hymn. I'll just read the first verse. "He is risen. He is risen. Tell it out with joyful voice. He has burst his three days prison, let the whole wide earth rejoice. Death is conquered, man is free. Christ has won the victory." Is there another victory that even compares with that? I can't think of one. It's amazing.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 29:38

That's beautiful, John. I would like to share this passage of scripture that we find in Jacob 4 in which he's actually extending an invitation to us. I love these words because they fill me with hope in the resurrection and he says, "Wherefore beloved brethren" and I will add sisters too, "be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ, his only begotten son. And ye may obtain a resurrection according to the power of the resurrection, which is in Christ. And be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God, having faith and obtained a good hope of glory in him before he manifesteth himself in the flesh. And now beloved, marvel not that I tell you these things for why not speak of the atonement of Christ and attain to a perfect knowledge of him as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?"

30:37 Isn't that beautiful? He's inviting us to speak of the atonement of Christ and to have hope in his resurrection. He resurrected so he could help all of us to be resurrected so the purpose of God can actually be fulfilled and his work and his glory can actually be performed. Issued an invitation to keep speaking about him, to keep testifying of him and to keep being witnesses of him. Of his resurrection, of his power, of his love, and of his light. I think that this is something that we should all be doing in a regular way every day of our life to testify of him and to bring other people to him so they can also feel that joy.

Hank Smith: 31:20

Beautiful. Abinadi facing his own death, I don't know who he's speaking to. If he's speaking to himself or speaking to Noah, he said, "There is a resurrection. The grave hath no victory. The sting of death is swallowed up in Christ. He is the light and the life of the world. A light that is endless that can never be

darkened, a life that is endless there can be no more death."
Reyna, it has just been a treat to have you with us. I think our listeners are thinking how wonderful you are.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto: 31:57

Oh, it's a privilege for me to be with you. I've been following you for years and I have learned so much from you and your guests, so thank you for inviting me. This is truly a privilege to be with both of you. I admire you and I know that you're trying to bring people to the Lord.

Hank Smith: 32:14

That's exactly right. To all of our listeners, Happy Easter. We hope you have a wonderful season and feel the Spirit of the Lord with you. With that, we want to thank Sister Reyna Aburto for being with us today. It has been fantastic. I don't want it to end. We want to thank our producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder and we're sure he's with us right now, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're going to continue our Book of Mormon studies on FollowHIM.

MARLENE'S FAREWELL TOUR



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello, everyone. Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. John and I are taking on a single story from each week's lesson. John, this is a great week. It's Easter at FollowHIM. I have a story for you, and I hope it's both fun and touching. You ready?
- John Bytheway: 00:17 Yeah, I'm excited.
- Hank Smith: 00:18 I'll try to make this short. I did a longer version of this on a talk on CD I did a long time ago and also a Y Religion episode that just came out recently, but I want to tell it here again because I really love it. It's about my in-laws, Sarah's parents, Rod and Marlene Savage. They met when they were in elementary school in Richfield, Utah, at the Ideal Dairy. They knew each other growing up. One day, Rod was talking to his school counselor in high school, and the school counselor said, "Who are you taking to prom?" And Rod said, "Oh, I don't do those kinds of things. I don't go to prom. I'm going to go hunting." And the counselor-
- John Bytheway: 00:58 What's the difference?
- Hank Smith: 01:03 Yeah. And the counselor said, "Well, every girl deserves to go to prom." And Rod never thought about that before, strangely. So he thought, "Well, maybe I'll ask someone. I'll ask Marlene," right? They've been friends since they were kids.
- 01:15 They went on this first date with each other and just had a wonderful time. Rod is very outgoing, and fun, and playful, and Marlene is a planner, organized, gets good grades. So they complimented each other really well and had a great night, and they ended up never dating anyone else again. They ended up getting married and moving down to St. George, which is where I grew up.
- 01:37 This story really begins when they have their first baby, Justin, baby Justin. He's two days old. They bring him home from the hospital. For fun, Rod decided to take Justin on a tour of the

house. So here, this baby is two days old, and he starts going item to item in the house like, "This is the refrigerator. Let's open it. This is the freezer." And this baby's just looking. He showed him every piece of silverware. And this tour of a little, tiny 500-square-foot apartment takes 90 minutes as he goes from painting to picture to television, just having a fun time with this baby. Well, just like most people's houses, I bet you have some of these, John, where kind of silly things become traditions, right? Things you just did, you didn't even think, "Oh, let's start a tradition." You just did it.

02:29 And so when Baby Amy comes, there's little Justin, two or three years old. Rod takes Baby Amy on the tour with both Justin and Marlene following along on this tour of the house. "Here's the couch, here's the window." Just this silly tradition. And then their third child, their fourth child, their fifth child, which is the best one, I think, because I married her, and then the sixth child. Every time the whole family went on this tour, and then the tour was off for a little while because they didn't have any more children. But then Justin had a baby, baby Chad. And the tour begins again for grandchildren.

03:12 John, I had to go on this tour. By that time I had joined the family, and they said, "Chad's here. Baby Chad is here." And this kid's a couple weeks old, "We're going on the tour." I asked my wife, I said, "What are we doing?" And she said, "This is what we do."

John Bytheway: 03:28 It's what we do.

Hank Smith: 03:29 So go with it. So I followed them around, and here he is showing him the piano. And he ended up using this as a teaching tool. He'd bring the baby right up to you and say, "This is your Uncle Hank. He's going to take good care of you. He's going to watch over you." And you're like, "Hey, kid." And I still talk to that kid, John. It was part of the tour. "I have to watch out for you. I promise." All the grandkids have been on the tour. All my kids have been on the tour. It was a fun tradition that turned into basically a family joy.

03:59 Well, in 2013, unfortunately, my mother-in-law, Marlene, was diagnosed with liver cancer. Less than a year later, she was placed on hospice and is at home, and she's going to pass away. The hospice nurses told Rod that it looked like she was going to pass very soon. They wanted to move her from her wheelchair to her bed one last time. Rod was about to do it when he had, I think, a spark of inspiration, John. He turned to his children,

who were all there, John, all six of them are there, and some grandchildren were there, and said, "Let's take mom on a tour."

- John Bytheway: 04:43 Oh, wow.
- Hank Smith: 04:45 My wife said it was one of the most beautiful moments of her life.
- John Bytheway: 04:49 Wow.
- Hank Smith: 04:49 My dad took her to the family room and knelt down in front of her, and said, "47 years of family home evening, how did you put up with us?" And then took her to the television room and said, "How many shows have we watched together, Marlene? How many John Wayne movies did you have to put up with?" And then he took her to the kitchen and knelt down in front of her, and said, "How many meals have you cooked for this family?" And he said something like, "You're the greatest cook that has ever lived." And my wife said, "Even my mother, who is kind of in and out, smirked at that like, "Are you kidding me? I'm not the greatest cook who ever lived.' "
- 05:34 The children kind of drifted away as this husband took his bride of 47 years through the rest of the house, and he wept. They looked at the pictures of kids and grandkids, and then he took her, picked her up, and laid her gently in her bed, and sat by her side, right there on the bed, and held her hand for the next few hours as she passed away.
- John Bytheway: 05:58 Wow.
- Hank Smith: 05:59 He didn't have to testify of the Resurrection, of life after death and the resurrection, he just believed in it and lived as if he believed it, right? He lived because this is what he believes, this is what he truly knows. I asked him about it, and he said, "I didn't want to send her into the spirit world sad. I wanted her to cross over happy. I wanted to celebrate this part of her existence, her mortality." He even whispered to her, John, right at the very end, he said, "Give my mom a big hug for me."
- 06:34 Maybe, John, with this story, one, how fun family traditions can be. Two, you never know what they might turn into, these beautiful teaching moments. And three, we might not ever have to... I mean, there's nothing wrong with testifying of what you believe, but for my wife, she knew what her parents believed because they lived their beliefs. It was part of who they were.

	07:04	Well, thanks for listening to that long story, John. I'm grateful for you.
John Bytheway:	07:07	Oh, that's so cool. That's a good sendoff.
Hank Smith:	07:11	Happy Easter from FollowHIM, everyone. Come join us on our full podcast. We're with Sister Reyna Aburto this week. It is a treat. She is just fantastic. She tells wonderful stories from her time in the Relief Society General Presidency. And then join us back here next week for another FollowHIM Favorites.