



Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

FollowHIM: 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:

What would a father's final words to his son be? Dr. Mark Ogletree examines how having faith in Jesus Christ is greater than any problems and how to become a "peaceable follower of Christ."

Part 2:

Dr. Ogletree continues to explore how to measure conversion, the love of Christ, and the Book of Mormon's powerful testimony of Jesus Christ.

Timecodes:

Part 1:

- 00:00 Part II - Dr. Mark Ogletree
- 02:38 Bio of Dr. Ogletree

- 04:08 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 08:12 Moroni 7:1-4 - Peaceable followers of Christ
- 13:32 Ukraine Temple
- 18:00 Moroni 7:6-9 - Guilt or fear?
- 22:17 Moroni 7:12-14 - Good continually
- 25:41 “War in Heaven” in the Bible Dictionary
- 31:41 Moroni 7:15-21 - Judging unrighteously
- 37:09 President Oaks’s “Judge Not and Judging”
- 43:05 how do we teach others to recognize the Light of Christ
- 47:30 Moroni 7:20-26 - Beginnings of faith
- 50:33 Moroni 7:27-31 - An angel’s job
- 54:27 Moroni 7:27:31-41 Gifts
- 57:32 Forfeiting the blessings promised?
- 01:04:25 President Eyring and meekness
- 01:07:38 End of Part 1 - Dr. Mark Ogletree

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II - Dr. Mark Ogletree
- 00:59 Joseph Smith grateful for warning of weakness
- 03:27 Moroni 7:45-48 - Measuring spiritual progress and conversion
- 06:34 Mormon’s age at various moments
- 12:11 Moroni 7:45-46 “Charity never faileth”
- 14:13 Moroni 8:6-17 - Infant baptism
- 18:42 Birth rate and replacement rates
- 20:07 Anti-family is anti-Christ
- 25:55 Elder Holland’s Six Crucial Questions
- 30:26 Moroni 9:4-11 - No love for others
- 35:38 Moroni 9:25 - Missionaries in Sodom and Gomorrah
- 41:33 Dr. Ogletree’s feelings about the Book of Mormon
- 45:59 End of Part 2 - Dr. Mark Ogletree

References:

Archives, Church News. “Elder Holland Testifies of Spiritual Lessons in the Book of Mormon.” Church News, January 30, 2024. <https://www.thechurchnews.com/1994/8/20/23256661/elder-holland-testifies-of-spiritual-lessons-in-the-book-of-mormon/>.

Brown, Gayle O. “Love in the Book of Mormon.” Love in the Book of Mormon . Accessed December 2, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book-mormon-keystone-scripture/love-book-mormon>.

Bytheway, John. “Moroni’s Guide to Surviving Turbulent Times.” Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book.
https://www.deseretbook.com/product/P5157453.html?srsId=AfmBOopGp70rvSdqf3m8PUn5_tORyxi0feG3Ck2Y1MaBUseBRGYDcgSR.

“December 9–15: ‘May Christ Lift Thee Up.’ Moroni 7–9.” Come, Follow Me - December 9–15: “May Christ Lift Thee Up.,” January 1, 2023.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-home-and-church-book-of-mormon-2024/50?lang=eng>.

“Elder Brent H. Nielson’s Ministry Among the Saints of the Caribbean West Indies.” Caribbean. Accessed December 2, 2024. <https://caribbean.churchofjesuschrist.org/elder-brent-hatch-nielson-visit-the-caribbean-west-indies>.

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Choose You This Day.” General Conference 2018 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 7, 2018.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/10/choose-you-this-day?lang=eng>.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Judge Not and Judging.” BYU Speeches, November 19, 2024. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/dallin-h-oaks/judge-not-and-judging/>.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The Challenge to Become.” General Conference October 2000 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2000.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2000/10/the-challenge-to-become.p28?lang=eng#p28>.

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

Elder David A. Bednar. “Walk in the Meekness of My Spirit.” BYU Speeches, July 18, 2023.
<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/david-a-bednar/walk-meekness-spirit/>.

Elder David R. Stone of the Seventy. “Zion in the Midst of Babylon.” General Conference April 2006 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2006.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2006/04/zion-in-the-midst-of-babylon?lang=eng>.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Meek and Lowly of Heart.” General Conference April 2018 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 31, 2018.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/04/meek-and-lowly-of-heart?lang=eng>.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Be Still, and Know That I Am God.” General Conference April 2024 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 6, 2024. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/04/21bednar?lang=eng>.

Elder J Ballard Washburn of the Seventy. “The Temple Is a Family Affair.” General Conference April 1995 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 1995. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1995/04/the-temple-is-a-family-affair?lang=eng>.

Elder James E. Faust of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Will I Be Happy?” General Conference April 1987 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 1987. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1987/04/will-i-be-happy?lang=eng>.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “A Prayer for the Children.” General Conference April 2003 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2003. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2003/04/a-prayer-for-the-children?lang=eng>.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Broken Things to Mend.” General Conference April 2006 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2006. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2006/04/broken-things-to-mend?lang=eng>.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “A Saint Through the Atonement of Christ the Lord.” BYU Speeches, April 16, 2024. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/jeffrey-r-holland/a-saint-through-the-atonement-of-christ-the-lord/>.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “We Are All Enlisted.” General Conference April 2011 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2011. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2011/10/we-are-all-enlisted?lang=eng>.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The Tongue Can Be a Sharp Sword.” General Conference April 1992 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 1992. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1992/04/the-tongue-can-be-a-sharp-sword?lang=eng>.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness.” General Conference April 2013 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2013. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2013/04/personal-peace-the-reward-of-righteousness?lang=eng>.

Elder Robert C. Oaks of the Presidency of the Seventy. “The Power of Patience.” General Conference April 2006 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2006. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2006/10/the-power-of-patience?lang=eng>.

Hilton, John. "Class 45 – Mormon 1-7: Quick to Observe." *The Book of Mormon: A Masterclass: John Hilton III*. Accessed December 2, 2024. <https://johnhiltoniii.com/thebookofmormon/class-45-mormon-1-7-quick-to-observe/>.

Hilton, John. "Class 46 – Mormon 8-9: We Believe in a God of Miracles." *The Book of Mormon: A Masterclass: John Hilton III*. Accessed December 2, 2024. <https://johnhiltoniii.com/thebookofmormon/class-46-mormon-8-9-we-believe-in-a-god-of-miracles/>.

Lewis, C. S. "CS Lewis - Right & Wrong." *Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe*. Accessed December 2, 2024. https://spot.colorado.edu/~heathwoo/readings/lewis_rightandwrong.pdf.

Madsen, Truman. "The Latter-Day Saint View of Human Nature." *From the Desk*, October 6, 2024. <https://www.fromthedesk.org/truman-madsen-human-nature/>.

Manzhos, Mariya. "What Lies Ahead When the World's Population Rapidly Declines." *Deseret News*, October 4, 2024. <https://www.deseret.com/family/2024/10/03/fertility-crisis-birth-rate-social-security-national-debt/>.

Millet, Robert L. "Alive in Christ: The Salvation of Little Children." *Alive in Christ: the Salvation of Little Children*. Accessed December 2, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book-mormon-fourth-nephi-through-moroni-zion-destruction/alive-christ-salvation-little-children>.

Ogletree, Mark D. "Preparing for Your Celestial Marriage." *Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book*. Accessed December 1, 2024. <https://www.deseretbook.com/product/P5176260.html>.

Ogletree, Mark D. "So You're in Love, Now What?" *Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book*. Accessed December 1, 2024. https://www.deseretbook.com/product/6013148.html?srsId=AfmBOortF_nF4BXyvq-4Kb1vBL8r6wuN8TF9JcjBOJr6uqRDWkh-SZL-.

Ogletree, Mark D., and Douglas E. Brinley. "First Comes Love." *lds.com*. Accessed December 1, 2024. <https://www.covenant-lds.com/first-comes-love.html>.

Ogletree, Mark, and Jane Ogletree. *Preserving Families Podcast*. Accessed December 1, 2024. <https://preservingfamilies.org/>.

Parry, Donald W. "Angels: Agents of Light, Love, and Power." *Amazon*. Accessed December 2, 2024. <https://www.amazon.com/Angels-Agents-Light-Love-Power/dp/1609075196>.

Peterson, Daniel C. "Understanding Islam." *Understanding Islam*. Accessed December 1, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/mormons-muslims/understanding-islam>.

“Preparing for Your Celestial Marriage.” Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book. Accessed December 1, 2024.
<https://www.deseretbook.com/product/P5176260.html>.

President and CEO Sheri Dew of Deseret Book Company. “You Were Born to Lead, You Were Born for Glory.” BYU Speeches, May 24, 2023. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/sheri-l-dew/born-lead-born-glory/>.

President David O. McKay President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “The Noble Calling of Parents.” Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: David O McKay - The Noble Calling of Parents - Chapter 16, January 1, 2011.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teachings-david-o-mckay/chapter-16?lang=eng>.

President Gordon B. Hinckley President of the Church. “Slow to Anger.” General Conference October 2007 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2007.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2007/10/slow-to-anger?lang=eng>.

“President Henry B. Eyring: A Legacy of Learning and Testimony.”
newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org, February 4, 2008.
<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/additional-resource/president-henry-b-eyring-a-legacy-of-learning-and-testimony>.

President Joseph F. Smith. “Chapter 48: Finding Rest in Christ.” Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith: Chapter 48, January 1, 2011.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teachings-joseph-f-smith/chapter-48?lang=eng>.

President Julie B. Beck Relief Society General President. “Teaching the Doctrine of the Family.” From a Broadcast Address Given to Seminary and Institute of Religion Teachers on August 4, 2009. - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 1, 2011.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2011/03/teaching-the-doctrine-of-the-family?lang=eng>.

President M. Russell Ballard Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Hope in Christ.” General Conference April 2021 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 3, 2021. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/04/28ballard?lang=eng>.

President Russell M. Nelson President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “Peacemakers Needed.” General Conference April 2023 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2023/04/47nelson?lang=eng>.

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

President Russell M. Nelson President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Joy and Spiritual Survival.” General Conference October 2016 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2016. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/10/joy-and-spiritual-survival?lang=eng>.

President Russell M. Nelson President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Joy and Spiritual Survival.” General Conference October 2016 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2016. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/10/joy-and-spiritual-survival?lang=eng>.

President Russell M. Nelson President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Joy and Spiritual Survival.” General Conference October 2016 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2016. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/10/joy-and-spiritual-survival?lang=eng>.

President Thomas S. Monson First Counselor in the First Presidency. “A Little Child Shall Lead Them.” First Presidency Message - June 2002 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, June 1, 2002. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2002/06/a-little-child-shall-lead-them?lang=eng>.

Richardson, Matthew O. “The Pure Love of Christ”: The Divine Precept of Charity in Moroni 7. Accessed December 2, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/living-book-mormon-abiding-its-precepts/pure-love-christ-divine-precept-charity-moroni-7>.

“Serve God by Serving Others.” Serving God by Serving Others- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Accessed December 2, 2024. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/serve-god-by-serving-others?lang=eng>.

Seventy, Elder Massimo De Feo of the. “Pure Love: The True Sign of Every True Disciple of Jesus Christ.” General Conference April 2018 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1, 2018. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/04/pure-love-the-true-sign-of-every-true-disciple-of-jesus-christ?lang=eng>.

“Statement of the First Presidency Regarding God’s Love for All Mankind.”
Catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org, February 1978.
<https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/06d52821-9342-4f20-9cb3-358e6f8c8bfa/0/0>.

Stephen R. Covey. “An Educated Conscience.” BYU Speeches, June 23, 2022.
<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/stephen-r-covey/educated-conscience/>.

“Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith.” Teaching of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January 1, 2011.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teachings-joseph-f-smith?lang=eng>.

“‘Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith,’ The Juvenile Instructor 27 (1892).” Doctrine and Covenants Central, September 30, 2021.

<https://doctrineandcovenantscentral.org/history/recollections-of-the-prophet-joseph-smith-the-juvenile-instructor-27-1892/>.

Biographical Information:



Mark D. Ogletree was raised in Texas and joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the age 18. He served an LDS mission from 1982-1984 in Seattle, Washington. He earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1987 from *Brigham Young University*; Master of Arts in Educational Psychology from *Northern Arizona University*, 1990; *Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling* in 1994 from Northern Arizona University; and a Ph.D. in *Family and Human Development* from Utah State University in May 2000.

Mark worked for 20 years in the seminary and institute program. He taught both seminary and institute in Mesa, Arizona, Logan, Utah, and later became the institute director in Dallas, Texas.

In 2010, Mark accepted a position at Brigham Young University as an Associate Professor in the Department of Church History and Doctrine. At BYU, he teaches courses on the Eternal Family and Living Prophets. Mark is now a full professor in the Department of Church History and Doctrine.

Additionally, Mark has worked in private practice for over 35 years as a Marriage and Family Therapist. Mark has published books and articles on marriage and family relationships. Some of his most recent books include:

- *Heaven is Cheering You On*
- *Beyond the Honeymoon: 25 Questions and Answers About Marital Intimacy*

- *The Making of a Man*
- *So You're In Love, Now What?*
- *Finding Peace in Difficult Times*
- *Babysitters Are Cheaper Than Divorces*
- *No Other Success: The Parenting Practices of David O. McKay*
- *Just Married*
- *Preparing for Your Celestial Marriage*
- *Just Married*
- *Raising an Army of Helaman's Warriors*

He is presently the stake president of the Edgemont North Stake in Provo, Utah.

Mark is married to the former Janie Cook, and they have eight children, and 27 grandchildren.

Mark and Janie are the hosts of a weekly podcast, “Preserving Families” that you can listen to on iTunes, Spotify, or from their website: www.preservingfamilies.org

Mark also hosts a weekly podcast, “Stand By My Servants,” that focuses on the lives and teachings of our living prophets. See www.standbmyservants.com

Fair Use Notice:

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

No copyright(s) is/are claimed.

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

The broadcaster gains no profit from broadcast content. This falls under “Fair Use” guidelines: www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html.

Note:

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



Moroni 7-9 Part 1



GUEST: DR. MARK D. OGLETREE

- Hank Smith: 00:00:03 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith, and I'm here with my co-host, John Bytheway, who suffereth long and is kind and envieth not, and is not puffed up, does not seek his own, not easily provoked, never thinks of evil. I could keep going here, John.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:23 I think I'm about three out of eight there.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:26 All of those things are true.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:29 I haven't eaten yet, so I'm not puffed up yet.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:33 We're also here with our guest Dr. Mark Ogletree. John, we are almost through the Book of Mormon. It is crazy to think that we've come this far. As we are hitting these final chapters today, Moroni seven, eight, and nine, what are you thinking about? What's coming to mind?
- John Bytheway: 00:00:53 When we finished the book of Mormon within the Book of Mormon, it was Moroni talking. Now, we're in the book of Moroni, and Mormon is talking. It teaches us something about this awesome father-son relationship. Here's Moroni saying, "My dad wrote me this letter. You've got to see what he said." I think we can infer something about their friendship, and some of it says it right out. "I recommend thee, my son," so I'm looking forward to seeing both of these wonderful men of Christ talk to each other here.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:23 Man, I love that John. I think of Moroni all alone, maybe pouring over these letters. This is his connection with his father. John, like I said, we have Dr. Mark Ogletree here. Mark and I have been friends for a long time. Mark, as you looked at these chapters, what did you see? Where do you want to go?
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:01:43 We could start with Monte Nyman's great statement that Mormon's sermon here in chapter seven ranks as one of the greatest surpassed only by the Savior. Just think of the depth as

we talk about faith, hope, charity, love, meekness, all these great Christlike attributes. We'll talk about family and children in chapter eight, and then in chapter nine, what happens to a society when they lose the Spirit? Those are some of the keys that we could focus on today.

- Hank Smith: 00:02:12 Wonderful. Well, John and I are looking forward to it. We're getting close to the grand finale of the Book of Mormon, and it doesn't fizzle out. We go out with some incredible chapters here. John, Mark has never been with us before. I've been holding him back.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:02:28 You guys are reaching up to the bottom of the batting order here. This is incredible. Say for the last inning, right?
- Hank Smith: 00:02:35 John, tell us all about Mark.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:38 Yes, Mark D. Ogletree is a professor of church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University. He also owns and operates a private practice in marriage and family therapy. Mark has written numerous articles and books on marriage and family-related topics. I know my son has [First Comes Love and then Comes Marriage](#). I think he wrote those with Doug Brinley. Along with his wife, Janie, he hosts a weekly podcast called Preserving Families. He has another podcast called Stand by My Servants, which is a perfect topic, and a couple of [recent books](#), one called, [So You're In Love, Now What?](#)
- 00:03:14 This would be great for young single adults, and then 20 questions and answers about making that marriage partner decision, and another one called Heaven Is Cheering You On, which sounds really nice. I've benefited from Brother Ogletree for a long time, and some people might recognize the name Ogletree. Wasn't there a Brandon Ogletree? Wasn't there a linebacker introduced himself to opposing quarterbacks at a high rate of speed?
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:03:40 He did. He did.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:42 Thank you for joining us today.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:03:45 Guys, so good to be with you. Once again, we are longtime listeners, so grateful for how you've blessed our family and our friends over the years. You're wonderful, and we're so grateful for this podcast.

Hank Smith: 00:03:56 That means a lot to us, Mark. We hope everyone will go check out Mark's podcasts. John, what are they again?

John Bytheway: 00:04:03 [Preserving Families](#) with Janie and [Stand By My Servants](#).

Hank Smith: 00:04:08 We love our sister podcasts out there. Mark, I'm going to read from the [Come, Follow Me manual](#). The title of this lesson is May Christ Lift Thee Up. Before Moroni concluded the record we know today as the Book of Mormon with his final words, he shared three messages from his father, Mormon, an address to the peaceful followers of Christ, and two letters that Mormon had written to Moroni. Perhaps Moroni included these messages in the Book of Mormon because he foresaw similarities between the perils of his day and ours.

00:04:37 When these words were written, the Nephite people were turning away from the Savior. Many of them had lost their love one towards another, and delighted in everything, save that which is good. Yet, Mormon still found cause for hope, teaching us that hope does not mean ignoring or being naive about the world's problems. Hope means having faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ whose power is greater and more everlasting than these problems. It means laying hold upon every good thing. It means letting the atonement of Jesus Christ and the hope of his glory and of eternal life rest in your mind.

00:05:10 Wow, that was beautiful and it gets me excited for today. So Mark, where do you want to start?

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:05:17 I thought about that, and I thought let's just go right to the first verse. But before we do, I thought it would be great to think of Moroni seven and eight and nine in the context of what went on in the book of Mormon, how we say it that way, meaning, Mormon one through nine. These are just some chapter heading snippets here for a minute. Mormon 1, wickedness, unbelief, sorceries, the world is so wicked. The three Nephites are taken off the face of the earth. Mormon 2, blood and carnage sweep the land, extreme wickedness. Mormon 3, think about this. Mormon refuses to lead them. Think of any type of leader in the church that's like, "Okay, that's it. I'm done." He refuses to be their leader, because they're so wicked.

00:06:00 Mormon 4, war and carnage, the wicked punish the wicked. Women and children are sacrificed to idols. The Nephites don't repent. Now, Mormon 5, more blood and carnage. Now, the Spirit ceases to strive with them. Then how about this? From Mormon, I was without hope. When the leader says, "I was without hope." When the prophet says, "We have no hope,"

duck. Take cover. He's saying that because no one is listening. They're rejecting the words of a prophet. So, we talk in that Mormon chapter five once again of a group of people who have completely lost the Spirit. It even tells us they were led by Satan at this point.

00:06:41 So, there's more, but I think that's a great backdrop when you think about those people and how wicked they were and how much they lost the Spirit, how they're following Satan. Now, watch what Mormon's going to talk about through Moroni in these chapters that we're going to address seven, eight, nine, in the context of, "Okay, guys, don't lose the Spirit. Become like Christ. Acquire His attributes. Do things for the right reasons. Learn to make decisions. Learn to make judgments based on true principles. Seek for peace. Obtain charity."

00:07:16 If you think of it, in the Book of Mormon, meaning chapters one through nine, this is all somewhere between 321 and 385 A.D. So now, we shift over to Moroni, and it's 400 A.D. It's 400. It's 421. But here's the part we don't know. Technically, these messages are given 15 years later after all that blood, carnage, wickedness, but maybe Mormon actually gave the messages much earlier. In fact, maybe he's giving these messages while all this craziness is going on in 385, 375 A.D. We don't know that part.

00:07:53 My point is it's really fresh on his mind of how quickly a society can degenerate when they lose the Spirit. With that as a backdrop, I think I would just go into the first three verses for a second. What if we did this, and had some fun? How about Hank reads verse one, John verse two, and I'll read verse three, and then we'll talk?

Hank Smith: 00:08:12 Moroni 7:1, "And now, I, Moroni, write a few of the words of my Father Mormon, which he spake concerning faith, hope and charity. For after this manner, did he speak unto the people as he taught them in the synagogue which they had built for the place of worship."

John Bytheway: 00:08:28 "And now I, Mormon, speak unto you, my beloved brethren, and it is by the grace of God, the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy will, because of the gift of his calling unto me that I'm permitted to speak unto you at this time."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:08:42 "And then wherefore, I would speak unto you that are of the church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope by which you can enter into the rest of the Lord from this time henceforth until you shall rest with

him in heaven." Now, going back to verse two for a second, I don't think we ever land on this one long enough, but think about what Mormon may be telling us. He's telling us that it was miraculous. "It was a miracle that I'm able to speak to you at this time. It was by the grace of God and my calling that I'm permitted to speak in my mind." I don't want to guess too much, but in my mind, it was such a crazy chaotic world they were living in. To preach in the synagogue, see verse one, was probably miraculous.

00:09:25 But then we get unto the peaceable followers of Christ entering into the Lord's rest, and I just thought, "Okay, let's talk about that just for a second." This is [Joseph F. Smith](#). He says, "What does it mean to enter into God's rest?" He said, "In my mind, it means entering into the knowledge and love of God, having faith in His purpose and in His plan to such an extent that we know that we're right and that we are not hunting for something else. We're not disturbed by every wind of doctrine or by the cunning and craftiness of men. We know the doctrine that's of God. We don't ask any questions of anyone about it. We are welcome to their opinions, to their ideas, but I pray that we may all enter into God's rest."

00:10:09 Then he said this, "Rest from fear, rest from doubt, and rest from apprehension of danger. Rest from the religious turmoil of the world." But in my mind, I'm thinking, "Okay, I think he's telling us about peace. I think he's telling us that despite how wicked the world is, and how crazy it is that we can still have peace in this life. [Elder Quentin L. Cook](#) talked in 2013, gave a wonderful message called Personal Peace: The Reward for Righteousness. In that message, he makes it very clear that universal peace is gone. In fact, when the Savior came, that was after he left, universal peace is over, but personal peace, he said, is something that each of us can have in our lives.

00:10:51 I think about our prophet, [President Nelson](#), who has told us that we can have happiness and joy regardless of the circumstances if we are focused on the right thing. Then in the world we live in today, we've got to be focused on the right stuff. "Look unto me in every thought. Doubt not, fear not." We focus on the Savior and on our families, and there are other things we can focus on that will bring great happiness here to us in this life, and great peace despite the crazy world that we live in.

John Bytheway: 00:11:22 What does it mean to be a peaceable follower? I had supposed like you that this is such a time of war that it was a contrast to be with the peaceable followers of Christ. I like what you said,

"This universal peace is gone." Elder Cook said, "Since Christ." I'd love to hear more about what it means to be a peaceable follower. I want to know if I'm doing that.

- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:11:46 One of the awesome things in my mind is we have a prophet. We have a prophet, seer, and revelator in [President Nelson](#) who's taught us exactly how to be peaceable followers. He's spent a lot of time about teaching us how to be peacemakers. Here's President Nelson saying that contention drives away the spirit. Think about that contention in the context of Mormonism. It drives away the Spirit. Then he says this, "Contention is a choice, but also, peacemaking is a choice. We have our agency to choose contention or reconciliation, and I urge you to be a peacemaker now and always."
- 00:12:19 Then one of the ways he talks about that is we could be the role models. As members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we can be the role models of how to manage honest differences of opinion. President Nelson, in that same talk, Peacemakers Needed said that charity is the antidote to contention. We know that this discourse on charity and this chapter, it's coming quite a few verses later, but he says that charity is the principal characteristic of a true follower of Christ. His true disciples build, lift, encourage, persuade, and inspire no matter how difficult the situation. True disciples of Christ are peacemakers.
- 00:12:57 I don't know, John, if that answers the full question on how to be a peacemaker, but it certainly highlights the way that we could be peacemakers with those around us. Elder Cook in his talk on having peace in our life, he talked about the peace that can come from, once again, being connected to Christ, knowing the Savior from the scriptures. But also, he talked a lot about the temple in that talk, and how the temple can bring great peace in our lives, and here we are in a time of turmoil, the world that we live in now, and here is President Nelson at every conference rattling off 20 more temples that are going to be built.
- 00:13:32 I think a great metaphor that I think about, it's you think of Ukraine. Here's a temple that hasn't even shut down in a war zone with missiles flying over the top of it being completely protected with members still going in there and doing ordinances in a war. Incredible contrast that we have today.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:50 You bring up the Ukraine temple. That made me think of the Manhattan temple. You both may remember way back in 2006, [Elder David Stone](#) gave a talk called Zion in the Midst of

Babylon. He talks about building the Manhattan temple. He says, "My involvement with building the Manhattan temple gave me the opportunity to be in the temple quite often. It was wonderful to sit in the celestial room, and be there in perfect silence without a single sound to be heard coming from the busy New York streets outside."

00:14:21 How is it possible that the temple could be so reverently silent with the hustle and bustle of the metropolis just a few yards away? The answer was in the construction of the temple. The temple was built within the walls of an existing building, and the inner walls of the temple were connected to the outer walls, and this is, I think, an important piece only at a very few junction points. That is how the temple, Zion, limited the effects of Babylon or the world outside, and he talks about there could be a lesson here. If we want to create Zion or maybe peace within ourselves, within our families, we can limit the extent to which Babylon will influence our lives.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:15:06 Hank, what a great story. What you just said reminded me so much of back to that talk that [Elder Cook](#) is referring to about personal peace in our lives, but he said, "Temples are where many of these sacred ordinances occur and are also a source of peaceful refuge from the world, and those who visit temple grounds or participate in temple open houses also feel this peace. One experience preeminent in my mind is the Suva Fiji temple open house and dedication. There had been political upheaval resulting in rebels burning and looting down Suva, occupying the house as a parliament, and holding legislators hostage. The country was under martial law.

00:15:44 The Fiji military gave the church limited permission to assemble people for the open house, and a very small group for the dedication. The members as a whole were uninvited due to the concerns for their safety. It was the only temple dedication since the original Nauvoo Temple that was held under very difficult circumstances. One person invited to the open house was a lovely Hindu woman of Indian descent, a member of parliament who was initially held hostage but was released because she was female. In the celestial room free from the turmoil of the world, she dissolved in tears as she expressed feelings of peace that overwhelmed her.

00:16:23 She felt the Holy Ghost comforting and bearing witness of the sacred nature of the temple. Here, she is not even a member of the church, and feeling the powerful spirit that comes from being at the temple.

John Bytheway: 00:16:35 That reminds me of [Elder Bednar's](#) recent talk where he said he went through an open house with reporters. I'm not reading it verbatim. I'm remembering, but he told them, "No one will speak when we're in the celestial room," and one of the reporters afterwards said, "I've never felt such..." What was the words he used? Perfect stillness in my life. "I did not know such stillness was possible." So, that's one of the things I love about being in the temple. He can't even hear the outside world. It just seems far away when you're in there.

Hank Smith: 00:17:04 Mark, an experience comes to mind. I think both of you know that I had a 90-day period in my life where a lot of people passed away. I lost my brother, then a close friend of mine, and then my dad all within 90 days. Of course, I was shaken and sad and grieving. Out of those three, my father was the last to pass away, and my nephew, who's my brother's son, he came to me, and he said, "How are you doing this?" I said, "How am I doing what?" He said, "You're okay. How are you okay?" He said, "I am not okay." He's an atheist. Good guy.

00:17:42 I said, "But you and I, we see this differently." It was interesting for us standing there, both standing there in the hospital. It was maybe one of those times where there was a stark contrast where I went, "Wow, what I do know makes a significant difference in the peace I feel."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:18:00 That's so good. Thanks, Hank, for sharing that. Let's go to verses six and seven for a minute. I wonder in the context that we're talking in, trying to root this back into the remember book of Mormon one through nine, how this may fit, but Mormon's going to give us a little treatment here of this idea of doing things for the right reasons. We're going to talk about motives just for a minute. In fact, if we looked at one of the cross references for footnote 6D, it says sincere motivations. Verse six, "For behold, God has said a man being evil cannot do that which is good, and if he offereth a gift or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent, it profiteth him nothing."

00:18:44 In other words, when we do things for the wrong reasons, if our intents aren't pure, then it's almost as if we didn't do it in the first place. Verse eight, "Behold, if a man being evil giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly wherefore it is counted unto him as the same." It says as if he retained the gift, or we would say as if he never gave the gift in the first place. If we pray, see verse nine, without real intent, it's as if we didn't pray. It doesn't profit us anything. A man being evil in verse 10 cannot do that which is good. Neither will he give a good gift.

- 00:19:17 We talk about motive, why we do what we do, in Moroni 7, 8, and 9. I've thought about that a lot. Why do we do some of the things that we do? We know that a lot of times, we do things out of guilt. I know that I do in my life. I'll do things out of guilt or fear. Sometimes we want fame. Sometimes it's going to benefit us in some way to be seen of men for advancement, for rank, for status, for wealth, for promotion, but there's a lot of other reasons too that are good. We do things because we love people. We want to help them. We do things because we love God.
- 00:19:52 I've heard people say, "I do this because I love the church. I want to help." You may remember that one of the very first talks that [President Dallin H. Oaks](#) gave in General Conference was this idea on why we serve. Do you guys remember that? 1984, he talked about every range. It was the October '84 conference. He was called in April. I don't know how long he spoke in that conference in April of 1984. You may remember that story, but he was out of town when they called him. President Oaks couldn't get to the conference until Sunday, and he was called there. I don't know if his talk was that long. This may be his first major talk in conference.
- 00:20:30 His range was everything from, "We serve others for hopes of worldly honors and prominence and power to obtain good companionship. Some of us serve out of punishment, some out of duty and loyalty." By the way, for those who do serve out of duty and loyalty, he did say that that's what the honorable men and women of the world do. That's not a bad thing, but then he talked about the highest reason for service. It's because we love God. We love His children, and we want to help build the kingdom. Once again, I'm sure all three of us in our experiences in the church and in other places have been aware that not everyone serves for the right reasons all the time.
- 00:21:11 I think what Mormon's asking us here is let's get our hearts right. Let's get our hearts pure, and let's make sure we're doing things for the right reasons. Otherwise, we lose the Spirit a little bit in our lives, and we become frustrated and sometimes bitter a little bit when we're serving and helping.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:27 Do you remember [Elder Renlund](#)? He caught me by surprise with this sentence, "Our Heavenly Father's goal in parenting is not to have his children do what is right." I thought, "Wait, what?"
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:21:40 Wait, where are we going here?

Hank Smith: 00:21:42 Then he said, "It is to have his children choose to do what is right, and ultimately become like Him. If he simply wanted us to be obedient, He would use immediate rewards and punishment to influence our behaviors." Do you remember what he said next? "God is not interested in His children just becoming trained and obedient pets who will not chew on his slippers in the celestial living room. God wants His children to grow up spiritually and join him in the family business." You're right on here, Mark. It's, "I don't just do what is right. I want what is right."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:22:17 Not a huge rant, but just one that I think is a great clarifier, in verse 12, that everything that is good comes from God. Everything that's good comes from God, and that which is evil comes of the devil, because the devil is an enemy to God, and fights against Him continually. I share that with you all because in our eternal family class at BYU, we talk about the plan of salvation, and as you guys know, when it comes to the pre-earth life, the grand council in heaven, there's always some things that are taught in our culture, not in our doctrine, but just in our culture that we're like, "Okay, that can't be right." One of them, maybe you guys were taught this before as well. I know I was. Satan was going to force us to be good.

00:22:59 He was going to force us to do good. I've always wondered where that comes from because I'm like, "Really?" Because why would the most malicious evil being in the universe want anyone to be good, and here in Moroni 7:12, it clarifies, "No, he doesn't want us to be good. He fights against goodness. He's the enemy to God, and fights against Him continually." Well, here's another key word. Now, we use this word continually in verse 12, that Satan is fighting continually, but look in verse 13, but also God who invites and enticeth to do good also, that's continually.

00:23:36 I think of the verse in Alma 50:1, "It came to pass that Moroni did not stop making preparations for war." Here, they are in a time of peace, but we are not going to stop making preparations for war. We are not stopping. We are going to be continuous. We're going to continually work at this. Here's President Nelson. The adversary is quadrupling his efforts to disrupt testimonies, and impede the work of the Lord. He is arming his minions with potent weapons to keep us from partaking of the joy and the love of the Lord. So, I always like to think, "Okay, if Satan is quadrupling his efforts to destroy us, we have to at least quadruple that back in goodness continually if we're going to match that," but of course, we want to do more than match it.

00:24:21 In order to stay out of his grip and his grasp and his influence, it's going to have to be more than quadruple. We've got to multiply that exceedingly so to speak. We need more goodness in this world today from us as members of the church.

John Bytheway: 00:24:35 First of all, I love the word that Mormon uses here, "Inviteth and enticeth," there's not a force. Then verse 13, "God inviteth and enticeth." King Benjamin uses that word as well. The natural man is an enemy to God and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be forever and ever unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit. As President Benson once said, "God votes for us, the devil against us, but we cast the deciding vote." Which enticements will I give into? The enticements are there from the Holy Ghost and from the devil. Which enticements will I choose to follow?

00:25:21 That idea about Satan forcing us to be good probably comes from the Pearl of Great Price phrase of, "He sought to destroy the agency of man." What was he really trying to do then? I would love it if we could explain that better.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:25:41 If we go to the Bible Dictionary, and look up war in heaven, one of the things that tells us... I think this is one of those hidden gems that some of our leaders have taught over the years and maybe we've missed it, but what Satan really wanted to do wasn't to force us to do good. What he was going to do is promise universal salvation for everyone, universal salvation. Now, I don't get in line in the pre-earth life. If someone's going to force me to do good, I'm being facetious, but many will get in line for free salvation.

00:26:12 John, I wonder with that question about agency, I wonder if that's part of it is, "Yeah, we were going to get free salvation, and we were going to have to do whatever the requirements were for that." Not sure what they were, but we weren't going to have a choice at this point. Satan was not going to allow us to have any choice. This is how it was going to be.

John Bytheway: 00:26:30 There was no choice. It wasn't trying to force righteousness. It was just that there would be no... Like Elder Renlund said, "He doesn't just want us to be good. He wants us to choose to be good." Satan didn't want to give a choice. Heard... Who was it that said Satan's plan wasn't a plan, it was a plot, because it wouldn't have worked?

Hank Smith: 00:26:49 Everybody say... You don't get to choose if you want to be saved.

John Bytheway: 00:26:52 Which fits the Pearl of Great Price statement.

Hank Smith: 00:26:54 You have no experience. You have no growth. I can shove you into this, and it actually is not going to work. It's going to be a fake salvation.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:27:02 From the Bible Dictionary, the war in heaven refers to the conflict that took place in the pre-mortal existence among the spirit children of God. The war was primarily over how and in what manner. The plan of salvation would be administered to the forthcoming human family upon the earth. The issues involve such things as agency, how to gain salvation, and who should be the Redeemer? The war broke out because one third of the spirits refused to accept the appointment of Jesus Christ as the Savior. Such a refusal was a rebellion against the father's plan of redemption.

00:27:35 It was evident that if given agency, some persons would fall short of complete salvation. Lucifer and his followers wanted salvation to come automatically to all who pass through mortality without regard to individual preference, agency or dedication. I think that answers it. John, at least I hope it does.

John Bytheway: 00:27:55 How does salvation work if there's no striving for righteousness, if there's no opportunity to strive even?

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:28:05 No opportunity for choice.

John Bytheway: 00:28:07 There's no power to act. A lot of people think agency means freedom, but it really means power to act. You have power to act stupidly too, I guess. Mark, that is so helpful. I hear parents sometimes protest, "Oh, I can't force. That's Satan's plan to be good," but what you just read from the Bible dictionary was no, Satan was proposing some sort of universal salvation without agency that would not have worked anyway, right? That's a different thing. It never sat right. This idea that Satan was trying to force us to do good, because that doesn't sound like him. What you just shared with us in Moroni seven was, "He inviteth and enticeth to sin continually."

00:28:49 It reminds me the necessity of agency and of opposition in all things. Reminds me of something. Do you remember, Hank, when we had [Daniel Peterson](#) on the program?"

Hank Smith: 00:28:58 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:28:59 He's, I think, we would probably say the church's expert on Islam. He speaks Arabic, and was educated in Egypt. I had a couple of cassette tapes from him years ago. Hank, anciently, I used to listen to something called cassette tapes. There was a two cassette tape set called [Understanding Islam](#), and he talked about in some areas of Islam, I guess, the most conservative. The young people are not allowed to mix the sexes, so they don't have dances together. They don't date. Somebody picks their spouse for them.

00:29:28 He had a paragraph in there which I never forgot. He just said, "If you allow the young people to mix, some immorality may result, but there's another thing that might happen, freely chosen virtue, which is a very good thing." He said, "It's one thing to choose the right when you have no other options, and another thing to choose the right when you could very easily choose the wrong," forcing salvation, that doesn't allow for the opposition in all things where you freely choose virtue.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:30:03 Yeah, I think it goes very well with Elder Renlund's statement back to he wants us to choose.

John Bytheway: 00:30:08 Not just to do what is right but to choose to do what is right.

Hank Smith: 00:30:12 John, Mark, I'm really interested in this discussion. Here's just an idea. Maybe this is Hank chapter one, and that's fine. I'm picturing the premortal life. Satan wants to destroy the agency of man. That's Moses chapter four. I wonder, why would anyone follow that? What if we hear something like this from the adversary? As our Heavenly Father presents His plan, you hear this, "That's your plan. You're God. You're the omniscient God. Really? Really, that's what you came up with. I can come up with something better."

00:30:48 "You're going to send these people down. You're going to risk them. They're going to have to sin, and then Jesus is going to have to suffer. Really? You couldn't come up with a better plan than that." To me, that is, "I can do better than you. I can do something you couldn't come up with."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:31:09 Yeah, I can see it. I can hear it.

Hank Smith: 00:31:14 Mark, thanks for putting up with our little tangent there. What do you want to do next?

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:31:18 Great thought. I think we go right to the heart of the batting order here. In the middle of this chapter, we've got the whole

treatment of verses 15 to 20-ish on judging in the light of Christ. Once again, we try to remember that in that context of Mormon giving us a message, he just came out of this situation where the people completely lost the Spirit. The Spirit is gone. He's going to tell us that you have to have the light of Christ first, the light of Christ, by the way, given to all men and women on the earth. President Oaks is saying that, given to every man and woman to know good from evil.

00:31:54 We talk now about judging for a minute, which is really interesting in the context of the world that we live in today. We hear a lot of people telling us, "We're not supposed to judge. Don't judge. To be judgmental is wrong." That's not scriptural. Already in this chapter in verse four of Moroni seven, Mormon's like, "Okay, I'm going to make a judgment here. I'm going to judge." We know that in Matthew seven, there's a verse that's interpreted in verse one. We always say this, "Judge not that you be not judged." Well, that's not the right, as we know, the translation.

00:32:25 Joseph Smith changed it, and it's big, "Judge not unrighteously that you be not judged, but judge righteous judgment," but we have to make judgments every day between good and evil, right and wrong. Our President Oaks would say between good, better and best. I mean, this is what our life looks like, so we better judge, but of course, we want to do it righteously, and that's what happens in these verses now is that we are taught how to judge in a righteous way.

John Bytheway: 00:32:53 Moroni 7:16, "For behold, the spirit of Christ is given to every man that he may know good from evil. Wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge, for everything which inviteth to do good and to persuade to believe in Christ is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ. Wherefore, ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God."

Hank Smith: 00:33:16 "But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil and believe not in Christ and deny him and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil, for after this manner doth the devil work. He persuadeth no man to do good. No, not one, neither do his angels, neither do they who subject themselves unto him."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:33:37 "And now, my brethren, seeing that you know the light by which ye may judge which light is the light of Christ, see that you do not judge wrongfully, for with that same judgment which ye judge, ye shall also be judged." So, there's that Matthew seven part. So, let's go back to verse 16 for a minute.

The way to judge is that anything that invites us to do good, and persuades us to believe in Christ, it's from him. It's from God. This is a great way for parents with teenagers today. What about movies? What about the things that we read, the things that we watch, social media, the friends that we hang out with?

00:34:09 If they are going to help draw us to Christ, that's a good thing, but in verse 17, "If it persuades us to not believe in Christ and to deny him and to serve not God, which means to serve not others, then it's not of God. It's of the devil," and the devil persuades no man to do good. No, not one. There's that idea of he's not going to force us to do good. He just doesn't do that. This idea of letting this light, this light that all of us have, I mean, we can build on that, and talk about the role that the Holy Ghost plays in our lives to make decisions, but that light of Christ is given to every human on the earth.

00:34:44 When someone tells us, "I didn't know you weren't supposed to kill somebody," okay, well, if you have the light of Christ, which you do, you know that that's not right. We had to seek diligently in verse 19 for that light. Seek for that light. Seek for the Savior. Lay hold upon every good thing, and then we will always be standing on holy ground. In verse 19, "So search diligently for the light of Christ. Search diligently. Strive to lay hold upon every good thing, and then we stand on holy ground."

John Bytheway: 00:35:16 What I love about this is it sounds like sometimes people like to wonder or speculate if there are gray areas. I love that in verse 15, he says, "You may know with a perfect knowledge as daylight is from the dark night." I don't know. What do you guys think about that? Are there gray areas? That was the end of Moroni 7:15 where he says, I'm going to tell you a way that you can say there, it sounds like he's saying, "I'm going to tell you a way to judge so that you won't be thinking there are gray areas."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:35:50 He does make it very polarizing, right? It's daylight or dark. It's one or the other.

Hank Smith: 00:35:55 Mark, would it be fair to say that maybe a movie or a television show or a website, a child, a teenager might say, "Well, that doesn't do either. It doesn't take me to Christ. It doesn't persuade me to do evil," but maybe we could add, "If this thing takes you towards the principles that Christ taught, honesty, goodness, mercy, if that thing is taking you that direction, then it is still taking you, persuading you to believe in Christ and the things He taught." Would that be fair?

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:36:29 I think so, and I think there's this other part of it too that helps us to know about the light of Christ. In our case, we would say, "Okay, what is the Spirit? What is the Holy Ghost pointing you towards here? What is the Spirit teaching you?" So yeah, Hank, I think that's right. Any virtue like that that you just mentioned are of God.

Hank Smith: 00:36:48 [C.S. Lewis](#) says, "When you find someone who says there's no such thing as right or wrong, you'll find the same person going back on that in three seconds." All you have to do is break a promise you made to them, and they'll say, "That's not right." So-

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:37:06 That's great.

Hank Smith: 00:37:09 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:37:09 Today, anything that sounds judgy people, "Oh, that's kind of judgy." Isn't it remarkable that someone who is a former Utah state supreme court judge was called to be an apostle? He's now in the first presidency. He gave a talk at BYU Speech called [Judge Not and Judging](#). Just the opening paragraph was such a blessing to me. He said, "As a student of the scriptures and as a former judge, I have had special interest in the many scriptures that refer to judging. The best known of these is judge not that ye be not judged. I have been puzzled that some scriptures command us not to judge, and others instruct us that we should judge and even tell us how to do it."

00:37:52 I'm convinced that these seemingly contradictory directions are consistent when we view them with the perspective of eternity. The key is to understand that there are two kinds of judging, final judgments, which we are forbidden to make, and intermediate judgments, which we are directed to make, but upon righteous principles. The idea of final judgments and then intermediate judgments, I think a final judgment, someone says, "Oh, if I'm not in your church, does that mean I'm going to you know?" I'm like, "Well, that's not mine. I don't know your past, your life, your trials." I am relieved of that.

00:38:34 I don't have to make a judgment about that, but intermediate judgments that we all have to make, "Who should I marry? Who should I hire to babysit my kids?" Well, we probably should make a judgment when we're thinking of something like that, and make a good one. That was a blessing to me. Have Elder Oaks put them in final judgments, we're forbidden to make. Intermediate judgments, we make based on these gospel principles, which I think Mormon is explaining right here.

Hank Smith: 00:39:01 Yeah, I love what you said there, John. If you go to 3 Nephi 14, similar to the Sermon on the Mount that we did with Brother Wilcox, Jesus says, "Judge not that you be not judged," but then go down to verse six, and it says, "Don't cast your pearls before swine."

John Bytheway: 00:39:18 Which is going to require a judgment.

Hank Smith: 00:39:20 A judgment.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:39:22 Right.

Hank Smith: 00:39:23 Obviously, he didn't mean never judge at all, but I think you're right there, John. It's not my place to make final judgments. Mark, I'd like to know more about what Mormon calls the spirit of Christ in verse 16 and that comes up again, the light of Christ. We talked about judgment, and here, Mormon is saying, "Use this spirit of Christ that every man has been given, this light of Christ." How would you explain that to a student or a teenager?

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:39:50 I think I would share with them a statement from back to President Oaks again that the light of Christ, which is sometimes called the spirit of Christ or the spirit of God, giveth light to every man that cometh into the world. Quoting section 84 verse 4, "This is the light which is in all things which giveth life to all things." He quotes Lorenzo Snow who said that everybody has the spirit of God. The light of Christ enlightens and gives understanding to all men. He says, "Now in contrast, manifestations of the Holy Ghost are more focused." I won't get into that yet, but he comes back and says once again that this light of Christ is given to everyone so that they can know good from evil.

00:40:33 In our day, and I'm thinking that maybe in the last few decades or whatever it seems like, we've had it explained to us by Sunday school teachers, seminary teachers and others, that the light of Christ is our conscience. We've heard that expression before that it's our conscience, but I'm not qualified to say, "Yeah, that's exactly what it is," but there is a light within all of us. What a great gift. We're all going to be resurrected, and we all have the light of Christ. It's a great gift that our Heavenly Father has given to all of us to navigate our way through this world. Everyone has the ability to determine if something is right or wrong. That's how I see it.

Hank Smith: 00:41:11 I love that. I occasionally will get asked by a student or one of my children, "What about other religions? We are right, and

they're wrong?" This verse really can help with that. Did you know... Back in 1978, there was a [first presidency statement](#) that I love. I don't even know why it was issued, Mark. Maybe you do. I don't know. February 15th, 1978, here's what it says among other things, "The great religious leaders of the world such as Muhammad, Confucius, and the reformers as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations, and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals."

00:42:00 I'm not in charge, but if I ever was, I might make this the 14th article of faith. We believe that God has given and will give to all people sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation. That's beautiful. The way we would see other religions is filled with the light of Christ, with the spirit of Christ.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:42:23 One of the things I would add Hank to that is I joined the church when I'm 18 years old, just in time to go on a mission a year later. But before that, we kind-of bounce around and our family to a lot of different churches, not super involved, but I can tell you honestly that growing up, I knew I had this awareness of what was right and what was wrong. I mean, there was no question about that. I can even say I felt inspired. The Holy Ghost wasn't my constant companion, but I felt inspired to do good things on occasion, and help people and to say nice things to people. Then I also made some dumb choices too, like we all do, but that was the light of Christ giving me that direction in those days.

Hank Smith: 00:43:05 Mark, anything else on that? How have you helped your children recognize that light of Christ, or how can we help others see that in their own lives?

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:43:17 I don't know if I could say light of Christ, but I certainly could say the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. I remember one time, our oldest daughter came home from church on a Sunday. We had dinner together. We always liked to talk to our kids about what they were learning in church, and one of our daughters said, "Well, I guess I don't have a testimony." We said, "Wait, why?" I mean, she was really sharp. I knew she knew. Now, I don't have a testimony. How come? "Because in young women's today, the young women's leaders, all three or four of them, and every girl was crying except for me. I was the only one who wasn't crying," and that was it.

00:43:52 She said, "So, I guess I don't know anything." I said, "No. Brittany, come on. Let's talk about some of the different ways

that the Holy Ghost can work." Throughout our life with our children, we would try to take those opportunities to teach them about Doctrine and Covenants Section 8:2. I'll tell you in your mind and in your heart and other references throughout the scriptures, that helps them to know that there are a myriad of ways. I think that's what I would want our children to know today and our grandchildren is, "Look, guys, there are a myriad of ways the Spirit can speak to you, and for every one of us, it could be really different."

00:44:24 Our quest really is to just learn how that works for us. That's what we have to do. Then as parents, I think we could try to do a great job of identifying the spirit, and helping them understand, "Okay, that was the Holy Ghost." When you had that thought come into your mind, or when you had this feeling, that was the Spirit guiding you.

Hank Smith: 00:44:43 Doctrine & Covenants 11, 12, 13, I can always remember it. Section 11:12 and 13, "Put your trust in that Spirit, which leadeth to do good, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously. This is my Spirit."

John Bytheway: 00:45:01 Yeah, there's different ways that you can know something is true, and Jesus said, "You'll know them by their fruits." Sariah suddenly sees the boys coming over the hill with the plates of brass, and says, "Now, I know, my husband hath been commanded to leave." I like that the Doctrine of Covenants in about four different places says, "I will enlighten thy mind, so I'll tell you in your mind." That discussion is a great one to have. What are some of the different ways that we learn?

00:45:28 I guess going back to this light of Christ, there's something that impels us to do good. Mark, you mentioned you were a convert. I've often thought about my dad at age 24 is when he joined, but he was literally dragged to church meetings on an aircraft carrier World War II. I've wondered if it's like a ladder where the light of Christ testifies that there's more, that there's something good here, and then you can feel the Holy Ghost, and then you can actually receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Hank Smith: 00:45:57 I like that, John, kind of a gradual strengthening.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:46:02 The escalation, yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:46:03 Then Jesus says, "I'm going to take you back to the Father, and I'm going to be your advocate."

Hank Smith: 00:46:08 Sounds like line upon line.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:46:10 I think that's exactly right. That explains it perfectly.

Hank Smith: 00:46:15 Mark, what do you think of this word persuade? It just stood out to me. The Spirit of Christ, and we would say the light of Christ, The Holy Ghost, even the gift of the Holy Ghost will persuade to believe in Christ. John used impelled but never forced. Never, "I'm in your face. You have to do this."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:46:35 It's really interesting how gentle the words are that Christ uses. One of my turnoffs is in the church, when we say use the word challenge, we're going to challenge you to read the Book of Mormon. Oh, the Bishop's challenge, they're going to read the book. Christ never challenged anyone. He invited. The idea of persuading is soft, right? It's gentle. It's persuade versus clubbing someone over the head. I think it's a wonderful word where the Spirit works on us, and there's this gentle persuasion.

Hank Smith: 00:47:05 There's a sense of agency, which we've talked about today already, which I want you to choose this. I want you to use your agency to choose this. So, Mark, we've been at this a while, and we've gone through an entire 18 verses.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:47:20 No one knows. This is like our fourth day on this, right, guys?

Hank Smith: 00:47:22 Yeah. We've cut out the whole second day.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:47:25 Without food or drink.

Hank Smith: 00:47:28 We just spent that on verse one.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:47:30 All right. There's a lot of internal validity that I'd love to recognize in this chapter that you see, once again, that pops up back in Mormon chapters one through nine. We also see the beginnings in verses 20 to 26 of this idea of faith. We're going to talk about faith, hope and charity here in a minute. We're leading up to that, but here we see the beginnings of faith. In verse 26, we have this idea that whatsoever thing you shall ask the Father in my name, which is good..." By the way, that's a qualifier, "which is good in faith, believing that you shall receive, behold it shall be done unto you."

00:48:11 Now, this is building on what John said early on is that you have Mormon talking in Moroni, and you have Moroni talking in the book of Mormon. Here we are in Mormon nine for just a minute. This is really a cross reference. There's some great

truths embedded here on what's being taught in these verses in 20 to 26, this idea that in Mormon 9:18, "And who shall say that Jesus Christ did not do many mighty miracles? And there were many mighty miracles wrought by the hands of the apostles." In verse 19, "If there were miracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles, and yet be an unchangeable being? And behold I say unto you, he changeth not. If so, he would cease to be God, and he ceaseth not to be God and is a God of miracles."

00:49:02 The reason why, verse 20, he ceases to do miracles among the children of men is because they dwindle in unbelief. They depart from the right way, and they know not the God in whom they should trust." Now, all that leads to verse 21. "Behold, I say unto you that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, this is a formula, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ, it shall be granted unto him, and this promise is unto all, even unto the ends of the earth." You talk about the relationship between Mormon and Moroni. Obviously, these are some of Mormon's teachings that Moroni is talking about or vice versa. They're probably teaching each other to some degree, but this idea that whatever we ask the Father in the name of Christ, it will be granted to us.

00:49:51 Now in our verse here in Moroni 7:26, it says, "Which is good," which is really interesting because in 3 Nephi 18:20, back to this idea of internal validity, it says the exact same thing, the whatsoever thing you should ask the father in my name, which is good. It doesn't say which is good. It says which is right. In other words, we can't just ask for anything. It has to be good, and it has to be right, but the Lord's going to grant that to us if we're on the right path, if there's purpose to it. Miracles are wrought today. In the next verses 27 through 39, we're going to talk about angels and miracles. Those are the very same things that are being taught in Mormon chapter nine.

00:50:33 This father and son are swapping out and talking a lot about some of the very same things. There must've been a lot of father-son talk around the campfire about some of these right principles here. 30 and 31, we're learning what an angel does. Before I read that, I want to share something that you guys may remember. You may not. It was 1994. [Elder Holland](#) spoke to all the Seminary & Institute teachers in the church in the Marriott Center, and he said this, "I am convinced that one of the profound themes of the Book of Mormon, one which may not yet have been developed enough in our teaching of young people, is the role and prevalence and central participation of angels in the everlasting gospel story."

- 00:51:19 That this idea of angels is a real theme. He's telling us in the Book of Mormon, and we learn in verses 30 and 31 the purpose of angels. Verse 31, the office of their ministry is number one to call us to repentance, number two, to fulfill and do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he's made to the children of men, number three, to prepare the way among the children of men by declaring the word of Christ to the chosen vessels of the Lord to bear testimony of him. It talks more about that, but we can't talk enough about angels in the church. It's one of the most underrated doctrines, I think. I know that in our own family, we have seven sons-in-law in our family. Two of them were almost killed in an accident a month ago.
- 00:52:03 There's no possible way they should have lived. Then another son-in-law yesterday jumped out of an airplane in a parachute in some military training, and landed on top of someone else's parachute, and ends up landing on his back and cracks his helmet in half. When I texted Jake this morning, I said, "Jake, in our family, we believe in angels. We have seen so many miracles happen in our life that we know that angels are real." He wrote back and said, "I know." He goes, "There's no way I should have lived." To testify of angels to our family and the role that angels play, I think, is something that we probably could do more of because it's certainly, as Elder Holland said, one of the great themes in the Book of Mormon that we often miss this theme of angels.
- John Bytheway: 00:52:45 I think angels is a fascinating topic. [Donald W. Parry](#), one of our friends, wrote a book called Angels back in 2013. It was so good, and it just makes you think. What's the verse that says many have entertained angels unaware? I like what you've done with this. The office of their ministry is, and it sounds like, "We want a job description of angels." Here it is. Here it is. Moroni 7:31, This is what angels do, and they can be on both sides of the veil.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:53:14 One of the things I think of is [Elder McConkie's](#) great teaching that there are five types of angels. He said, "There's pre-existent spirits. There's translated beings. There's spirits of just men made perfect, meaning the spirit world waiting the resurrection. There's resurrected beings." But then he says, "Righteous mortal men and women can be angels, right?" When you think that angels bear good tidings, angels do the Lord's work, angels bless. They help and they serve. You just think of all the angels around us in our wards, in our stakes, in our communities.
- 00:53:47 Once again, when you put it in that context of Moroni chapter 7, because we know that charity's coming up here pretty soon, I think part of the idea is we should pray and seek for angels, but

we should be angels to those around us. We want to be angels. The three of us know so well that there are angels among us. No question about that. We won't sing the song yet, but there are angels among us, and we get to work and rub shoulders with those great people every day. They're blessing our lives.

- Hank Smith: 00:54:17 It reminds me of our executive producer and our founder, Shannon and Steve Sorensen. They love that song Angels Among Us.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:54:27 When 36 to 38, we've learned in verse 37 that miracles are wrought by faith, that angels minister to us by faith. Start this right part of the sermon now on faith, hope and charity, and faith has been discussed and talked about a little bit. We're going to get into hope. Maybe hope is the one that's a little bit underrated. These are all attributes of the Savior. By the way, they're all gifts. Did you notice that, John? By the way, they are all gifts.
- John Bytheway: 00:54:57 I caught it. It went through, but I caught it.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:55:00 Yes. They're all gifts that we can pray for. We can pray for the gift of faith. We can pray for hope, and we can certainly pray for charity, but I love this idea of hope, and maybe I can read verse 40, "And again, my beloved brethren, I always speak unto you concerning hope. How is it that ye can attain unto faith? Save ye shall have hope." What is it that you shall hope? In verse 41, "I say unto you that you shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection to be raised up unto eternal life, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise."
- 00:55:35 Now, there's been a lot said about hope. [Elder Holland](#) spoke very specifically though about this verse. He said, "Hope is much more than wishful thinking. It is to have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of His resurrection to be raised unto eternal life, and this because of your faith in Him according to the promise," he's quoting verse 41, "that is the theological meaning of hope in the faith, hope, charity sequence with an eye to the meaning." Moroni 7:42 then clearly reads, "If a man have faith in Christ and His atonement, he must needs as a consequence, have hope in the promise of the resurrection, because the two are linked together in such a powerful way. For without faith in the Atonement," these are just words Elder Holland's adding. "There cannot be any hope in the resurrection."

- 00:56:25 He's tying those key doctrines together, but I would like to spread hope out a little bit wider, expand it because of course, hope is in eternal life, and the resurrection, there's great hope in that. The resurrection in my mind is the greatest theological doctrine that we have. It's incredible, but hope is also faith. It's also optimism. It's expecting things to happen. In other words, we can have hope in a lot of things, not just eternal life. We could have hope, great hope in this life. One of the things I've learned is I've studied the lives and teachings of our apostles and prophets is that they are all so hopeful.
- 00:57:02 You guys have noticed that. They're so optimistic. There is no such thing as a pessimistic apostle. [Elder Ballard](#) said, "I speak of hope in Christ, not as wishful thinking, but in expectations that will be realized." We think of all the promises that have been made to us in blessings and in other parts of our life, and I think hope is this belief in the promises that have been made to us, and believing what President Monson said that the future can be as bright as our faith. There's a lot to hope, I think.
- John Bytheway: 00:57:32 I want to ask you a question, Mark. Have you ever had someone say, "I'm afraid I have forfeited the blessings of my patriarchal blessing, because I have messed up?" What's a good answer for that to give people hope?
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:57:46 John, I'm going to answer that in a personal experience I just recently had at the stake level, where this person told us that was the very thing that they said after this council concluded was, "I am afraid that I have forfeited everything that my patriarchal blessing has promised." Now, what I'm about to tell you is I'm going to give you my opinion. I'm not saying this is doctrine, but in my mind, I told this person. I said in my mind, "Heavenly Father, he's an omniscient God. He knows everything from the end, from the beginning. He knew that this was going to happen to you. He knew that you were going to step in these places, but guess what? He still promised those things when that patriarch laid his hands on your head when you were 16 years old, the Lord knows everything."
- 00:58:29 "Don't feel like those promises are negated just because you made a bad choice and a bad decision. Hold on to hope. Trust in the Lord's promises to you. Live faithfully and live righteously. If those promises don't happen in this life, then they're sure to come in the next. Heavenly Father promised you those things, knowing what would happen to you at this little stage of your life where you've had some mess ups." We want people to have hope. We want to encourage people. We always... For any priesthood leader out there listening, we don't want anyone to

ever leave our office without feeling hopeful, without feeling lifted and happy and encouraged and believing.

- Hank Smith: 00:59:09 Mark, I've shared this a couple of times on the podcast. What you said made me think of it is the raising of Lazarus. It's been too long. He's been gone too long. The Lord can't do anything at this point. You're right on there. When someone says, "Oh, I've been gone too long. I've forfeited the blessings," just watch the Savior opens that tomb, and calls you out.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 00:59:32 He opens that door. I love that. How about this idea? We've talked about the trifacta, faith, hope, and charity. This is just my opinion, but it's really mind-blowing to me that we don't count the concept and the doctrine of meekness in verse 44 as one of the keys to the faith, hope, charity, or in other words, faith, hope, meekness, and charity. Look at what it says in verse 44, "None is acceptable before God save the meek and lowly in heart, and if a man be meek and lowly in heart and confess by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity."
- 01:00:11 We talked about stair stepping a minute ago, but it feels like charity is preceded by this idea of meekness. We're not acceptable before God. We can't qualify for the celestial kingdom if we're not meek. Meekness now gets the award of the year for the most underrated Christlike attribute that's almost forgotten over and over again. If it's okay with you all, I'd love to share something from Elder Bednar's talk that he gave on meekness. It's kind of fun for us at BYU, because often, these apostles and other leaders will come and give a talk at BYU, and then you'll hear them talk about the same thing in General Conference six months later or a year later, because you know it's been on their mind.
- 01:00:50 But [Elder Bednar](#) said that meekness is not weak, timid, or passive. Meekness is the quality of being God-fearing, righteous, teachable, patient and suffering, and willing to follow gospel teachings. A meek person is not easily provoked or irritated, pretentious, arrogant or overbearing. Whereas humility generally denotes acknowledging dependence upon God, and receptivity to counsel and correction, a distinguishing characteristic of meekness is a willingness, a particular willingness to learn both from the Holy Ghost and from other people who may seem to be less experienced or capable, who may not hold a prominent position or otherwise may not appear to have much to contribute.

- 01:01:34 Maybe right now, you guys as church religious educators, your mind's being triggered a little bit, and thinking of all those stories we've heard [President Eyring](#) tell about his dad, who's this world-renowned physicist traveling the world, and then stopping at the gas station, and talking to the gas station attendant for 20 minutes, because he's trying to learn about tire pressure and carburetors and things like that. There's President Eyring in the back seat, at age 16, totally embarrassed that his dad's talking to this guy for so long, and then his dad gets in the car and says, "Look, I can learn something from everyone." That's part of what this idea of meekness says.
- 01:02:09 I think of being coachable and teachable, able to accept correction. If you guys are okay with this, from that talk, Elder Bednar tells two fascinating stories, but maybe we just have time today for one.
- Hank Smith: 01:02:22 Stories are the best. Our listeners love stories.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 01:02:26 I worked extensively with President Eyring during the transformation of Ricks College from a two-year junior college to the university known today as BYU Idaho. At the time, he was a member of the 12 and the commissioner of church education. Elder Eyring visited the Rexburg campus to assess the progress of the transition. I shared with him a status report on student enrollment projections, physical facilities, renovations, construction projects, hiring of new employees and many other topics. We devoted considerable time to reviewing the financial resources and timeline necessary for the success of this transition.
- 01:03:02 During our time together, it became apparent that Elder Eyring and I had differing interpretations of the total resource package that had been approved by the Church Board of Education for the transition. Now, that's a great thing right there to bring up is here's two men, one, a future apostle in Elder Bednar, and one, an apostle in Elder Eyring that don't quite agree on this issue. We've worked together to come to a common understanding, but were not successful. I then indicated my willingness to do whatever the brethren directed, but I also explain that fewer resources would necessitate the transition plan and timeline to being scaled back accordingly. We ended our workday together without achieving a final resolution.
- 01:03:43 Elder Eyring spent the night in our home, and when he came into the kitchen for breakfast the next morning, his first statement was, "President, I was rebuked by the Holy Ghost last night." He then indicated that the transition should continue

going forward as outlined the previous day, and that he had no ongoing concerns about the resources. Then he said to me something I've never forgotten, "President, if you have not been rebuked lately by the Holy Ghost as you are praying, then you need to improve your prayers." Given this extensive experience in institutions of higher education, his position as a member of the 12, and his authority as the commissioner of church education, he simply could have decided, "This is the way it's going to be," but he didn't do that.

01:04:25 Elder Eyring learned of and from the Savior. He listened to his words that came by the power of the Holy Ghost, and then walked in the meekness of the Lord's Spirit. I learned a valuable lesson about meekness through this experience with Elder Eyring. Such meekness is essential, well, for inspiring and experiential learning. The other one is from President Oaks, which is just interesting as here are two men that Elder Bednar is highlighting as apostles and members now of the first presidency. In one of our quorum meetings, Elder Oaks expressed a strong opinion about a course of action that he believed should be pursued. The reasons he articulated were convincing, and his knowledge about the issue was extensive.

01:05:03 His arguments in favor of the action were compelling, but as we counseled together, a less senior member of the 12 expressed agreement with the basic course of action, but registered a reservation about the proposed timing. Now, Elder Oaks could have countered the concern with a response like, "I believe I know a lot more about this matter than you do," but he didn't. With no hint of defensiveness or indignation, Elder Oaks asked that his quorum member, "Would you please help me understand your reservation about the timing?" After listening intently to his apostolic associate, Elder Oaks pondered for a moment, and then said, "The point made by Elder Blank is valid. I had not considered the timing implications of this action, and the way he has, and I am persuaded that the proposal should be reworked based on what we have learned in this discussion."

01:05:54 Now, here's Elder Bednar. Elder Oaks learned of and from the Savior, he listened to his words that came through the voice of a fellow quorum member, and then he walked in the meekness of the Lord's Spirit. I learned valuable lessons about meekness through this experience. It's so good. In fact, I believe one of the common denominators of our leaders, there's a lot of great men and women in the church, but my own personal opinion is that these leaders who serve us as general authorities, as prophets, seers, and revelators, they have in common the

attribute of meekness. It's so evident in the things that we read about them.

01:06:28 Now, in a marriage and family situation, we can be meek. We can be coachable. We can be teachable. We can say, "Lord, is it I?" I mean, that's always the greatest thing we can ask in any type of conflict is, "Lord, is it I?"



Moroni 7-9 Part 2



GUEST: DR. MARK D. OGLETREE

- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Dr. Mark D. Ogletree, Moroni chapter 7 through 9.
- 00:06 Here's Mormon saying, if all men had been likened to Moroni and look at Moroni yelling at Zerahemnah and look at Moroni writing letters to Amalickiah and Amoron. But watch Moroni being meek to God, you don't have to let evil walk all over you, and that really helped us to see, you can be strong in the face of evil, but when God's talking or your leaders are talking, that's a different thing, which is what you just illustrated. And it was so cool, because right after that, after we came to some of these conclusions after wrestling with it, [Elder Bednar](#), I want to say April 2018, gave that talk in general conference about meekness and just answered it for us.
- Hank Smith: 00:50 There's a story from the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that I both love and hate.
- John Bytheway: 00:56 Oh.
- Hank Smith: 00:56 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:58 It's going to be a good one.
- Hank Smith: 00:59 It says-
- John Bytheway: 00:59 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:59 "A woman went to Joseph Smith upset about some things another member of the church had said about her. The prophet told her that if what the person had said was untrue, she should ignore the matter because truth would survive and untruth wouldn't. The woman felt the comments were untrue, but she was not satisfied with ignoring it. The prophet then told his way of handling such comments. When an enemy had told a scandalous story about him, which had often been done. Before he rendered judgment he paused, and let his mind run back to

the time and place and setting of the story, to see if he had not, by some unguarded word or act, laid the block on which the story was built. If he found that he had done so, he said that in his heart, he forgave his enemy and felt thankful that he had received a warning of a weakness he had not known he possessed."

	02:01	Oh.
John Bytheway:	02:01	Wow. That's great.
Dr. Mark Ogletree:	02:03	Wow.
Hank Smith:	02:04	Thank you for showing me that weakness in myself.
John Bytheway:	02:09	Oh.
Hank Smith:	02:09	But that's meekness, right?
John Bytheway:	02:11	Completely.
Hank Smith:	02:12	Yeah. Can't imagine.
Dr. Mark Ogletree:	02:14	Hank, I love that story, it goes back, once again, to that principle that we teach in marriage a lot and in family relationships, "Lord, is it I?" It's the first place we go.
	02:24	Another part now, to finish chapter seven is, a course with charity. I mean, probably the highlight of the chapter, one of the great Grand Christlike attributes, once again, placing this in context with what goes on in the book of Mormon, chapters one through nine of a civilization that has lost the spirit, who is murdering, killing, a prophet who says, "I give up, I'm done, there's no hope." And here, now we have this great sermon on, you know would've changed everything if we would've had charity. If we could have charity, that Christlike love, in verse 45, "Charity suffers long." Elder Holland said, when you read this verse, verse 45, put the word, "Christ" in when you see charity. "And Christ suffers long, Christ is kind, Christ envies not, Christ is not puffed up, Christ doesn't seek His own, Christ is not easily provoked. Jesus doesn't think evil, he rejoices not in iniquity, but he rejoices in the truth."
	03:27	One of the great attributes of the Savior, of course, is his kindness, his unfailing charity, and the great hope here, in verse 48, is that all of us can obtain charity. Sometimes we have people who will say, "Well, that's just not me. I'm just not that

nice. I don't think I could do that." No, we can because, number one, the attributes of God are within us. Lorenzo Snow taught that principle, that they're there. But number two, we can pray, as it says in verse 48, "To pray unto the Father with all energy of heart, to be filled with His love." So that ultimately, when Christ appears, we shall become like him, we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope and be purified even as he is pure.

04:12

I think it's really awesome to think about a couple of thoughts here that just always resonate with me. We talk about charity and kindness, but I think there's probably some among us, myself included sometimes, that may gauge or measure our spirituality by how often we spend in the scriptures or in the temple or in our callings. Here's [Elder Ashton](#), who's actually quoting someone else, but the best and most clear indicator that we are progressing spiritually and coming unto Christ, is the way that we treat others. And I was so grateful to hear [President Nelson](#), back to that peacemakers talk, say almost the exact same thing. He said, "One of the easiest ways to identify a true follower of Jesus Christ is how compassionately that person treats other people." Once again, there's the measurement really, of true greatness and true spirituality, is how we treat others. By obtaining charity in our lives, this pure love of Christ, the love that Christ has for all of us, that's what really matters. That matters, really, more than anything else. He really cares about how we treat others.

John Bytheway:

05:21

Yeah. I remember [Sheri Dew](#) telling a story about seeing a church leader ask the question, "How do you know when someone's converted?" And they filled up a dry erase board with responses and then the leader erased everything except what was right in the middle, how they treat others. Sheri said, "At first I was like, really?" And then she said, "As I started studying the scriptures, I was stunned." The one that comes to mind is, "By this, shall all men know," and it's not how many callings you've held, how many books you've read, how many scriptures you've memorized, "By this, shall all men know," if you have love one to another? And that's gosh, it's right there, that's exactly right.

Hank Smith:

05:57

Yeah. Someone pointed out to me once that, and Mark, you've talked about this, if you go to Mormon, in the book of Mormon chapter three, verse 12, he says, "I prayed but it was without faith." And then you go to Mormon chapter five, verse two, which you pointed out, "I was without hope," and then they said, but you notice he never loses his love for them. And then in Moroni seven, you can have faith and you can have hope, but charity never fails.

John Bytheway:	06:29	Charity endures forever.
Hank Smith:	06:30	Yeah, love never fails.
John Bytheway:	06:34	One time I made a chart of Mormon's life of war. He has been at war for most of his life and yet listen to what he's talking about here and how did he do that so quickly? Mormon 2:2, at age 15, leading armies against the Lamanites. Mormon 2:9, he's 19, attacked by an army of 44,000. Mormon 2:15, thousands hewn down in open rebellion against God, when he was 32 years old. Mormon 2:22, when he was 35 years old, Lamanites attacked again. Mormon chapter two verse 28, when he's 39 years old, Nephites retake lands, make a treaty with Lamanites. Mormon, three verse four, he's 49 years old, Lamanites attack again. Mormon chapter three verse seven, he's 50, Lamanites attack the city of desolation. Mormon three verse eight, when he is 51, Lamanites come down again to battle. Mormon chapter four verse one, he's 52 years old, Nephites go up and attack Lamanites. Yeah.
	07:30	Mormon four verse seven, at age 53, Lamanites attack Teancum, the city. Mormon 4:15, when he is 56 years old, Nephites attack Lamanites. Mormon chapter four verse 16, when he's 64 years old, an innumerable army of the Lamanites attack. Mormon five verse six, when he's 69 years old, the Lamanites attack again. Mormon six verse five, when he's 73 years old, the Nephites gather at Cumorah for a tremendous battle. This guy has spent his whole lifetime in war and he's giving us this incredible sermon on faith, hope and charity and telling us to seek Jesus, which is remarkable. He did not become what he was surrounded with, because of the power of Christ.
Dr. Mark Ogletree:	08:18	That's great. Wow, insightful. Well, one of the things that I'm always touched by, is the love and the charity that's demonstrated in our wards and stakes across the world. It's so moving of how people take care of each other. I mean, we have a family in our stake right now, that there was a serious accident in the family and you can't even help. There's a Google Doc to sign up to help this family and there are so many people on it, you have to elbow someone to get in there to help bring food or whatever. But I love that about us, it's such a defining trait.
	08:51	And so President Thomas S. Monson shared this story. He said, "Not long ago, I received a touching letter from Sister Mori Farmer. It tells of two home teachers," and so we can change that as ministering brothers, "and the loving service they provided for the Farmer family during a time when the family

was experiencing some difficult financial circumstances. At the time the service was provided, the Farmer family had gone out of town to attend a family reunion. I share with you the first letter written to the Farmer family by their ministering brothers or home teachers, which the family found taped to their garage door when they returned home."

- 09:27 "It begins this way, "We hope you had a great family reunion. While you were gone, we, and about 50 of our friends, had a party at your house, a great party. We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the years of unselfish service you both have given to us. You have been Christ-like examples of untiring service to others. We can never repay you for that, but just thought we'd like to say thanks. Signed, your home teachers.""
- 09:50 "I now quote from Sister Mori Farmer's letter to me," President Monson said. "After reading that note from the home teachers, we entered the house with great anticipation. What we found shocked us so much, we were at a loss for words. I stayed up all night crying over the generosity of the people in our ward. Our home teachers had decided that they would fix our carpet while we were away. They had moved all the furniture out into the front yard so the carpet could get stretched and finished. One man in the ward stopped and asked, "What was going on?" He returned later with several hundred dollars worth of paint and said, "We might as well paint the house while everything is out." Others saw the cars in front and stopped to see what was going on, and by the week's end, 50 people were repairing, painting, cleaning and sewing."
- 10:33 "Our friends and fellow ward members had fixed our poorly laid carpet, painted the entire house, repaired holes in the drywall, oiled and varnished our kitchen cabinets, put curtains on three windows in the kitchen and family room, did all the laundry, cleaned every room in the house. Had the carpets cleaned, fixed broken door latches, and on and on. In trying to make a list of all the wonderful things they did for us, we filled three pages. All of this had been accomplished between Wednesday and our return on Sunday. Almost everyone that we talked to told us with tears in their eyes, what a spiritual experience it had been to participate."
- 11:07 "We've been truly humbled by this experience. And as we look around our home, we are reminded by the kindness and the great sacrifice of time, talents and money that they made for our family. Our home teachers have truly been angels in our

lives and we'll never forget them and the wonderful things they've done for us."

- 11:27 But once again, highlighting that those are the type of things that happen, maybe not to that extent. But for sure, those are the type of things that happen across the church, everywhere in the world, and it really is a hallmark of our identity of who we are. We take care of each other.
- John Bytheway: 11:42 What's beautiful about that story to me, is when those people are inside working and anticipating the surprise this family's going to have when they get back. I bet they're giggling, I bet it doesn't even feel like work. I bet they're so excited going-
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 11:57 Right.
- John Bytheway: 11:58 "Oh, I cannot wait to see their face." Yeah, it doesn't feel like work anymore as you're giggling with anticipation for their reaction when they get back. That's a great story.
- Hank Smith: 12:11 Mark, we've had you for a while now and we've just stayed in chapter seven. Honestly, how much longer could we spend in Moroni seven? Literally, we could talk about this every day for hours. What does that tell you about the book of Mormon? That even a single chapter is almost bottomless when it comes to what you can learn? Do either of you have anything left in chapter seven that you want to talk about right now? Because I want to push us forward into chapter eight and nine.
- John Bytheway: 12:38 Three words, in verse 46, which have been the Relief Society motto for years, "Charity never faileth." Lots of things can fail, but charity never faileth. And as you taught us, Mark, that [Elder Holland](#) said, put Christ in there, Christ never faileth. A shout-out to the Relief Society, who've had that motto for years, in fact, sometimes you've probably done this too when you're in class, talking about this trial of this family, this. If only there were some sort of, I don't know, society that could bring relief or something, I wonder what we could call them.
- Hank Smith: 13:11 I wonder what that would be.
- John Bytheway: 13:13 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 13:14 Charity is the pure love of Christ. You could have a lot of fun with that. What's the pure love of Christ? Is it love for Christ that we have for him? Is it the love of Christ that he has for us?

Is it that we love like Christ, other people? Like we said, Moroni seven is endless. All right, Mark, chapters [eight and nine](#).

- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 13:37 Wonderful. This is different now, this is not a talk, this is a letter. This is a letter that Mormon writes to his son Moroni. For a minute, maybe all of us think of, okay, what is our passion? What trips our trigger? What is that thing, if it gets brought up, we're just going to go off for a while? We're going to find out for Mormon, what it is, here, because he's talking about, in the first couple of verses, of praying for his son, giving some good counsel here. And then we get to verse four though, "I speak unto you concerning that which grieveth," that's a pretty strong word, "grieveth me exceedingly." Think about that. "It grieveth me that there should be disputation."
- 14:13 So first of all, I'm really upset about there's disputations but then, "I have learned that there are disputations among you concerning the baptism of your little children." Now look at verse six, "I desire that you should labor diligently, that this gross error should be removed from among you." And he says, "And this is the entire intent I'm writing this letter." But that's pretty strong, we got to remove this. In fact, look at this, verse seven, "For immediately after I learned of these things," right after I learned about your disputations about infant baptism or child baptism, I wrote this letter and here we go. This is something that really is a passion for Mormon as he's going to teach us about this great teaching and doctrine here.
- 15:03 Verse eight, "Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world, not to call the righteous," he's quoting the Savior here, "but sinners to repentance. The whole need no physician, but they that are sick." I couldn't resist looking up the word, whole, in the Oxford dictionary, "Unbroken, undamaged, free of defect or impairment, unimpaired, perfect. In Hebrew, "Completeness or perfection." So we talk about this idea of the whole, little children, they're not going to need baptism. In this case, it says, little children are whole, they're not even capable of committing sin, he talks about. And he calls it in verse nine, "A solemn mockery," that we would baptize little children.
- 15:48 Verse 10, "I say unto you that this thing shall you teach, repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin." And this is great, actually, you should teach parents that they're the ones who need to repent and be baptized. So he's on a rant here, "And then humble themselves and become like their children." Little children need no repentance, they don't need baptism, in fact, we are to

become like children. See Mosiah 3:19, "Submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love," all those kind of attributes.

- 16:23 And he goes on to say in verse 15, that God would be wicked if he supposed that children would need to be baptized. I mean, that's pretty strong, in fact, verse 15, "For awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of baptism and the other must perish with no baptism." It's just pretty strong here, he's speaking with boldness and with authority. But then he says in verse 17, it's almost like, "Oh, in case you think I'm getting mad, I'm actually filled with charity, I'm good."
- 16:51 "All children are alike unto me, I love little children with a perfect love. They are all alike and partakers of the salvation of God." Now check this out guys, if you have an electronic version of the scriptures, if you're using a phone or an iPad or whatever, and click on the related content so it shows us all the footnotes and references on the side. For verse 17, "I am filled with charity, I love little children with a perfect love." The cross-reference footnote is actually a portrait of Joseph Smith cleaning with his handkerchief, the face of a young boy. And it says, "The prophet Joseph loved children."
- 17:31 I just like the idea in verse 17, where Mormon says, "I love little children with a perfect love." That's pretty good company to be in, you got Mormon, you got Joseph Smith, and of course, we have the Savior who has taught us over and over again, some of these key doctrines of children. I thought I would just share with you a concern, using some data just for a second, about children in our country.
- 17:56 So Hank and John, I think it's fascinating that we have a whole chapter devoted to the baptism of children, and sometimes we may think, is that out of proportion? Is that out of context? But I think there's a message here, of how much the Lord loves children, how much Mormon loves children, how much we should love children. We live in a world today, where children aren't as valued as they used to be. So today, in a recent study, one-third of millennials said that they don't even want to have children. 34% said, they don't want to give up their flexibility. 32% said, they don't want the responsibility. 50% of women in our country between the ages of 25 to 29, have not had children. And 30% of women between the ages of 30 to 34, are child free.
- 18:42 Now, listen to this. The replacement rate, I don't know if you've ever heard this terminology, but the replacement rate in our

country and across the world, is 2.1. What does it mean? A 2.1 fertility rate means that a father and mother will have two children to replace themselves. I'm sure the 0.1 accounts for infant mortality or something like that, but it's 2.1, is what the rate is. Right now, in 2024, in our country, our fertility rate is 1.78, which is one of the lowest times it's ever been, 1.78. In other words, we, as a country are not going to replace ourselves. And if anyone thinks that's probably okay or it's not a big deal, it's actually a huge deal. There was an article in the [Deseret News](#) in the month of October, that talks about the damaging effects, economically and in so many other ways.

19:35 John, you and I were born in 1962. The fertility rate in 1962 was 3.39, which means a mother will have 3.3 children in her lifetime. Hank, you just showed up in '78, when it was kind of like it is now, there was a little crisis going on and it was 1.76. It was actually a little bit lower than it is right now, 1.78. So Hank, I'm here to tell you today, it's a miracle that you were even born.

Hank Smith: 20:03 Yeah, wow.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 20:03 We're so glad that you're here.

Hank Smith: 20:04 Yeah, especially since I was number five of five.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 20:07 Yeah, exactly. We live in this world, we're becoming a childless society, which as you guys know, would extinguish ourselves pretty quickly. It's an anti-child, anti-family world in so many ways and in so many places, and you may remember, in [Julie Beck's](#) wonderful talk, called Teaching the Doctrine of the Family, back in 2010. That if it's anti-family, then it's anti-Christ and if it's anti-Christ, it's anti-family. We're not about just having children, it's not just about replacement rates, it's about loving children, it's about nurturing children, it's about leading them and laughing with them. If we're going to be full-fledged followers and disciples of Christ, then we need to follow Christ's example of how he loved and valued children. And when our family proclamation that tells us that children are a heritage to the Lord, that's Psalms 127:3, but often we don't read that whole verse, but here it is.

21:02 "Children," they're talked about in that verse of Psalms 127 verses three to five, "Children are a heritage of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of youth and happy is the man that hath a quiver full of them." A quiver full of children, a home full of children. [President McKay](#), "A newborn babe is the most

helpless creature in the world, but also" he said, "Our children are our most precious possessions, our treasures of eternity, those are our children. And these merit and should receive our greatest and our most constant care and guidance."

21:45 [President James E. Faust](#), "No gift bestowed upon us is so precious as children. They're proof that God still loves us." Here's [President Monson](#), "When we realize just how precious children are, we will not find it difficult to follow the pattern of the master in our association with them." Some of us are familiar what Christ taught about children, we know that he loved children. He talked about them often, "For of such," he said, "is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven is made of children or people who are like children. "Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

22:22 Or how about this one, "Whoso should offend one of these little ones. It were better for them to have a millstone hanged about their neck and they be drowned in the sea." That's so powerful when you think of how Christ felt about children. I think some of the great artwork we have today, is Christ and the children.

22:40 But back to that footnote 17 of Joseph Smith. This is [Truman Madsen](#), remember the picture of Joseph Smith with the footnote? "Many have observed that Joseph's love for children was remarkable, that he seemed to find deep happiness in playing with a child on his knee and helping one cross a muddy field or picking flowers to give to children or wiping away their tears. I believe that the response of those children and we have record of many, to him, is one of the lasting witnesses of the nobility of his soul. Children are not easily deceived and many have described how they felt in his presence, how he loved children." And you guys are probably aware of some of those great stories, but there's so many of Joseph reaching out.

23:25 Here's one, "Joseph would make his way to as many of the wagons as he could as they were coming into town. Cordially shaking the hand of each person, every child and young babe in the company were especially noticed by him and tenderly taken by the hand with his kind words and blessings." If we want to be true disciples of Christ, we've got to put this back on the map. It's a great indicator of how we're progressing spiritually, is how we treat others, but how about this? Another great indicator of our spiritual progression, is how we treat children and how we treat other people's children as well. It's one of the great marks of discipleship in my mind and something that we can't lose. As the world slips away from children and their value and their

importance to our society and our world, as members of the church, we can't, we have to value and love the children and to take care of them and protect them.

- Hank Smith: 24:18 I love it.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 24:19 I don't know if either of you remember Elder J. Ballard Washburn. I found him to be such a wonderful, strong member of the Quorum of the Seventy and talk about meek, a meek, meek man, who was strong and powerful. He's the one that someone told the story of standing up in the middle of an exam in medical school and saying, "If one of you cheats, I'll turn you in right now. I sacrificed all this money, I live in a one bedroom apartment with my wife and five kids and I'm working my way through medical school."
- 24:47 But here's [J. Ballard Washburn](#), he says this, he says, "The story is told of Elder Boyd K. Packer, after traveling all over the world and seeing many exotic places, he was asked if he could go anywhere in the world, where he would go. And he said, "I would go home." And then Elder J. Ballard Washburn said, "I feel the same way." If I were asked the same question, I would say, I would go home and I would sit in a big rocking chair and I would take a couple of grandbabies in my arms and hope that a little of the heavenly dust they still have on them would rub off on me."
- 25:19 I feel the same way, I would sit in my big chair with two or three of my grandkids and rock them, I don't need to go anywhere else. [Elder Holland](#), in his talk, A Prayer for the Children, which the three of us recommend to any of you.
- Hank Smith: 25:33 You got to hear him.
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 25:34 Yeah, because there's so much passion. He asks some questions to all parents, because this moves us from little children to maybe even older children and teenagers. We, as parents, need to be the prime teachers of the gospel in our homes and have this great influence on our children, this great impact, that only parents can have.
- 25:55 Here's Elder Holland, with six crucial questions for all of us. "Number one, do our children know that we love the scriptures? Do they see us reading them and marking them and clinging to them for daily life? Number two, have our children ever unexpectedly opened a closed door and found us on our knees in prayer? Have they heard us, not only pray with them,

but also pray for them, out of nothing more than sheer parental love? Number three, do our children know that we believe in fasting as something more than just an obligatory first Sunday of the month hardship? Do they know that we have fasted for them and for their future, on days at which they knew nothing? Number four, do they know that we love being in the temple, not least because it provides a bond to them that neither death nor the legions of hell can break?"

26:43 "Number five, do they know that we love and sustain local and general leaders of the church, imperfect as they are, for their willingness to accept callings they did not seek, in order to preserve a standard of righteousness they did not create?" And that's so profound, the way he says that, and then, "Number six, that those children know that we love God with all of our heart and that we long to see his face and fall to the feet of his only begotten son." He says, "I pray that they'll know this." And said, "Not only the responsibility that we have to love and nurture our children, but to teach them these gospel truths, because if we don't, who's going to?"

27:21 Like [Steven R. Covey](#) said once, that the greatest investigators of the church that we have, are our own kids.

Hank Smith: 27:28 Mark, you pointed out that Mormon is very passionate about this. Compared to some of the other things he talks about, he seems most passionate about this. I'm certainly not sure, but perhaps he's concerned about what infant baptism says about God, about the Lord and his nature. He says it twice, verse 20, "That is denying the mercy of Christ." And he says it again in verse 23, "It is mockery denying the mercy of Christ." Perhaps the doctrine says that Christ is not merciful, maybe that's what's getting Mormon so riled up, is you're missing the whole point. If you are going to baptize infants, you're saying Christ is not merciful. You can see why that creed or that belief would not be pleasing. Mormon would say, "That creed is an abomination in my sight."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 28:25 Well, yeah. They're not recognizing the nature of God, once again, and his mercy that extends to these children. And then he also talks about this idea that in order to be baptized you have to be able to repent and little children, they don't know how to do that yet and that's where he turns it and says, "Parents, you're the ones, you repent and get baptized first," but they're not there yet. Yeah, Christ's mercy covers that. Verse 22, "All little children are alive in Christ." I love that," and the power of redemption cometh through all of them," he says.

Hank Smith: 28:58 There's a story, this one is from [Robert C. Oaks](#). Wasn't he a General?

John Bytheway: 29:03 He was a general in the Air Force, yeah.

Hank Smith: 29:06 He told this story in General Conference. It's another one of those that I love and try to live up to. He said, "Recently, I attended the funeral of a lifelong friend, his son told a beautiful story. When the son was in his youth, his dad owned a motorcycle dealership. One day they received a shipment of shiny new motorcycles and they lined them all up in the store. The boy did what every boy would like to do and he climbed on the closest one, he even started it up. Then when he figured he had pushed his luck far enough, he jumped off. To his dismay, his dismount knocked the first bike down, then like a string of dominoes, they all went down one after another. His dad heard the commotion and looked out from behind the partition where he was working. Slowly, he said, "Well, son, we'd better fix one of them up and sell it so we can pay for the rest of them.""

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 30:09 That's a good dad right there.

Hank Smith: 30:11 I think my friend's response personifies parental patience. This isn't just about infant baptism, but it's about how we see children, how we treat our children, do we see the value of children in our society? Thanks for that.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 30:26 Well, Hank, thank you so much. [Chapter nine](#), this is the Second Epistle and once again, for me personally, trying to embed this back in the book of Mormon, chapters one through nine. Have to wonder if some of the letter that was written here, some of this could have been done or addressed, maybe while we're back that deep in the book of Mormon, and I'll show you why I think that in just a second. We're talking about, in this chapter, some serious challenges that the Nephites have here. As we look at verse four, tell me if every parent hasn't thought this before, "I am laboring with them continually, and when I speak the word of God with sharpness, they tremble and anger against me, but when I use no sharpness, they harden their hearts against it." Or in other words, "If I say something, they get mad, if I don't say anything, they don't do what we're asking them to do."

Hank Smith: 31:18 Then nothing happens.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 31:19 Yeah, nothing happens.

Hank Smith: 31:20 Yeah. I think [Elder Holland](#) said it once, "Subtle doesn't seem to work."

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 31:25 So he says, "I fear, lest the Spirit of the Lord hath ceased striving with them." Now, in my little margin here, I wrote the word, hopeless, a while back, and then I remembered from our conversation just now, that back in Mormon chapter five verse two, "I was without hope." There's that phrase again. And you wonder if this is why he was at without hope, there was nothing he could do as a leader, they weren't responding. Once again, I fear that they're going to lose the Spirit, Mormon understood what happens to a society when they lose the Spirit. This is a great warning to all of us, of what could happen to our civilization if we lose the Spirit of the Lord in our lives and among our people. They became so wicked in verses nine and 10 of chapter nine, that they literally, this is like rape, plunder, murder, cannibalism. This is about as low as you can go in a society, in fact, in verse 11, "They are without civilization." There is no civility here, there is no respect for others, there's no love for others, there's no caring concern for other people.

Hank Smith: 32:32 He adds, "They are without principle, they are past feeling."

John Bytheway: 32:36 All those withouts, order, mercy, civilization, principle.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 32:41 And once again, we liken everything to our day, but just think, okay, what can become of our society if we give away our values, if we're without principle, if there's no right or wrong? It doesn't work, this is what it leads to, right here. The final plea in verse 25, is, "Be faithful in Christ." And just think that he's saying this in a context of a war-ridden wicked society, that, "Guys hang on to Christ. Hang on. He's our only hope. We can make it if we hang on to him."

33:11 The great counsel, I think [President Nelson](#) has been so prophetic in our day. I'm not sure if I remember in my lifetime a prophet that when he spoke, it was almost as if every sentence were a verse of scripture, in President Nelson. The very first message, maybe the most repeated quote of his entire ministry is this one, "That I am optimistic about the future, it'll be filled with opportunities for each of us to progress, to contribute, to take the gospel to every corner of the earth, but I'm also not naive about the days ahead. We live in a world that is complex and increasingly contentious. The constant availability of social media and a 24-hour news cycle bombard us with relentless messages, and if we are to have any hope of sifting through the myriad of voices and philosophies of men that attack truth, we have to learn to receive revelation."

- 34:04 And then he gives this great promise that, "We will see miraculous indications, that God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this church in majesty and glory." That's such a great promise, "But in the coming days it will not be possible to survive spiritually, without the guiding, directing and comforting constant influence of the Holy Ghost."
- 34:24 Now, often when we share this statement, we stop right there and don't read the next part, which says, "I plead with you to increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation." That's an invitation to every one of us, but once again, we're looking in Moroni nine, at a society that completely lost the Spirit and almost turned animalistic, we could say. For us to become saints and to be refined and polished and to live in a day of chaos and craziness and uncertainty, we have to have the Spirit, the Holy Ghost with us, to give us guidance and direction. But it's also that Spirit that helps us to become more Christ-like, that sanctifies us and cleanses us and prepares us to stand in the presence of the Lord.
- Hank Smith: 35:10 I love it.
- John Bytheway: 35:11 Hank and Mark, we had a previous guest who talked about the, "Yeah, but they," principle for choosing your own behavior. I've always loved verse six, "Now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness," which he's going to describe, some pretty awful terms, "Let us labor diligently." And I've always loved this idea of, you don't have to go with the flow, whatever they're doing, we can do something different. Let us labor diligently.
- 35:38 Do you guys remember [Truman Madsen](#), he told some sort of little legend, he said about a missionary in Sodom and Gomorrah. And somebody said to him, "Why do you continue to preach here? Why do you continue to labor? You're not doing any good here." His answer was, "Well, at first, I preached so that I might convert them, and now I continue to preach so that they won't convert me." There's great power in, do what you're supposed to do, notwithstanding them, let us labor diligently, because we have a labor to perform in this tabernacle of clay. We're going to do what's right, we're not going to do what's popular necessarily, as this society is breaking down. And here's this father and son saying, "We can do this, son," which, just love about this chapter.
- 36:25 Another verse that I've always loved here is, verse 25, "My son, be faithful in Christ. May not the things which I have written grieve thee to weigh thee down." Everything you just quoted, Mark, from President Nelson, he doesn't seem weighed down.

He's telling us how to face the future. He's very aware of what's going on out there, but like Mormon here, "I didn't write this to weigh thee down, but may Christ lift thee up. May his sufferings and death and the showing his body unto our fathers," look at this, "The atonement, the resurrection, his mercy and long-suffering and the hope which he talked about, of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever." Is that the best way to close a letter you've ever heard in your life?

- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 37:11 So encouraging and building.
- John Bytheway: 37:12 Yeah, "And I've told you a bunch of really bad stuff about what's going on, but this is what I want to leave in your mind, to have rest in your mind." It's a great closing.
- Hank Smith: 37:24 It is. I've always found it interesting that in Mormon, I think it's Mormon chapter five, Mormon says, "I better not tell you of all that I'm seeing. I do not want to harrow up your soul with all that I'm seeing." Then Moroni says, "Well, I will," right? And he includes the letter.
- John Bytheway: 37:40 "I'll tell you, I'll tell you."
- Hank Smith: 37:41 Yeah. Happen to spare world, "Why'd you put that letter in there? I said, I didn't want to tell them."
- John Bytheway: 37:48 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 37:48 Mark, I've noticed something in what you've taught us here and since you're an expert and we're going to channel Janie's expertise through you as well. Mormon is trying to raise a faithful child in a very terrible world. You have children who are now having children and you've taught family classes and you have the family podcast, so what comes to mind when those of us who are parents out here, are going, "How do you do this? How do you raise Moroni's in a without principle world?"
- Dr. Mark Ogletree: 38:25 It's a great question. Here's how I would answer it. To me, there's a couple of things that we could do. Number one, is we have to shut down the doom and gloom of the world that's constantly pounding in our ears through media, through social media. And this great book that's out right now, you guys may have heard of it, by, I think his last name is, Haidt, called The Anxious Generation. It's his recommendation, that children should not even have cell phones and have access to social media until they're 16, and the reason why, is because what his research has shown, is that this generation's being ruined on

social media and with the influence of the world. If I was a parent again today, we'd be watching that really closely, number one.

39:07 Number two, we'd be anchored in the gospel as much as we can and teach our children that there's great hope and there's great power and there's great strength that comes from living the gospel, from keeping commandments and covenants, by putting the gospel at the center of our lives and also following prophets. That's a serious thing, that our prophets literally have the words that can save us physically and spiritually.

39:32 Now, going away from that a little bit, we know that the world is going to become crazy and it's going to only get crazier. That doesn't mean that we have to have our lives ruined, and I take great hope and great comfort once again, from our leaders, from our prophets, seers and revelators like [President Nelson](#). Who are telling us, that you can have happiness, that you can have joy in this life if you're focused on all the right things. Back to the idea of look unto me in every thought, doubt not, fear not. What are we focused on? What are we building our foundation on? Because if we're building that foundation on Christ and the gospel, if we're having gospel discussions in our home, if we're having fun with our families, making our home the kind of place where our children want to be. And they want to be around their parents, they want to be at home where they're having fun with their siblings and then their friends are coming over and having fun at our house as well.

40:23 But those are the type of things that I would try to focus on, but also I would really want my children to know that there's so much good in the world, that there's so many good people. God's kingdom continues to move forward. We saw that during Covid, a lot of people weren't paying close attention, but if you were, you saw, while the world was shutting down, we were building temples, opening up new missions, the baptisms continued. We live in a world today, now, where according to [Brent Nielson](#), one of our general authorities, 20,000 baptisms a month in the church, temples dotting the land. No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing. Those are the optimistic, hopeful things I would want my children to be paying close attention to that. That as the world slips away and spirals downward, we can keep going up, where we can follow the model of the church, the church continues to march on and march forward and build with momentum and steam, because it's true and it's led by living prophets and by the Savior himself. So awesome, isn't it?

Hank Smith:	41:27	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	41:27	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	41:29	Mark, can I ask you one last question before we let you go?
Dr. Mark Ogletree:	41:32	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	41:33	You have gone to a lot of school, you've done a lot of teaching, you've held a lot of church callings, you preside over a stake right now, you've read a lot of studies, I'm sure you've read parenting books and family books. In all of your experience, where does the Book of Mormon rank in what you've seen, what you've read, what you've done? Where does the Book of Mormon fall in your life?
Dr. Mark Ogletree:	41:57	Well, obviously it's number one. The Book of Mormon is our guiding star, it's the keystone of our faith, it's the keystone of our religion. But what the Book of Mormon does for me and I think for many others, is once again, having grown up in other faiths and other churches, I now know and understand the Atonement of Jesus Christ better, and in a more complete way than I ever could or would've anywhere else in my life, at any other stage of my life. I mean, the Book of Mormon opens that up to us. It's the teachings of the Book of Mormon, once again, that give us hope, we feel the power and the strength. I know that all three of us have read a lot of stuff in our life, but have you ever been so illuminated as when we read from the pages of the Book of Mormon? Even as I've read the New Testament and other wonderful scriptures, there's still something different about when you read the Book of Mormon.
	42:49	We're raising our children in Texas, our five oldest are in high school almost at the same time. One day I turned to my wife and say, "You know what we need to do? We live here in the Bible Belt. I think it's time, we've read the Book of Mormon several times now, as a family. It's time to read the New Testament." And my wife is always so good, she just looked at me and she said, "I'll tell you what, you find a promise like from President Romney and others, of what happens when you read the Book of Mormon. You find a promise like that when you read any other set of scriptures, and we can cross over and read some of those too. But until you find promises like the peace and love in our homes, the depth of conversion in our hearts, the spirit that we feel when we read. When you find that, all right, we'll start reading that, but until then, we're going to stick with the Book of Mormon.

43:34 Yes, the Book of Mormon is the guiding star for us, because it's full of truth and as we read it, we can be personally inspired and receive our own personal revelation, because the Book of Mormon is full of truth and God's word.

Hank Smith: 43:50 Mark, thank you for spending your time with us today. You're so kind to come over and bring your expertise, your experience.

Dr. Mark Ogletree: 43:58 Guys, this has been an awesome opportunity to be with both of you.

Hank Smith: 44:02 Yeah, this is what we do for fun, everyone, we open scripture and talk about it. We are very grateful to have had you.

44:09 And with that, we want to thank Dr. Mark Ogletree, for spending his time with us today. We want to thank our executive producer, the wonderful, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And every episode, we remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week, John, it's Moroni chapter 10.

John Bytheway: 44:33 Wow.

Hank Smith: 44:34 Our last lesson in the text of the Book of Mormon.

44:39 Before you skip to the next episode, I have some important information. This episode's transcript and show notes are available on our website followhim.co, that's followhim.co. On our website, you'll also find our two free books, Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament and Finding Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Both books are full of short and powerful quotes and insights from all our episodes from the Old and New Testaments. The digital copies of these books are absolutely free. You can watch the podcast on YouTube, also, our Facebook and Instagram accounts have videos and extras you won't find anywhere else.

45:13 If you'd like to know how you can help us, if you could subscribe to, rate, review and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra and Annabelle Sorensen.

President Russell M. Nelson: 45:33 Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, turn to him, follow him.

TALK SHOW TRUTH



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello everyone. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. This is where John and I share a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we're in Moroni seven, eight, and nine. I have a story for you. It's from Moroni seven, verse 48.
- 00:15 Moroni says, if you live with faith, hope, and charity, eventually you'll become like Jesus, "and when he shall appear, we shall be like him." It's not about, I've done a lot of charitable things, it's I've just become charity. Here's the story, and it's about someone you know. I believe you taught him. Jonathan Heder. Do you remember Jon?
- John Bytheway: 00:39 I made a roll on a spreadsheet, an attendance roll, where students could just check the box. Jonathan did not check the box. He doodled dragons up and down, going throughout the length of the spreadsheet.
- Hank Smith: 00:51 Just a little at each time?
- John Bytheway: 00:53 Just a little dragon each time, and I saved that roll because I thought it was so interesting. I did not know that Jonathan Heder would become who, Hank?
- Hank Smith: 01:01 He has taken on many roles, but probably his most iconic is Napoleon Dynamite.
- John Bytheway: 01:08 Incredible.
- Hank Smith: 01:09 John, he probably learned it all from you.
- John Bytheway: 01:11 I gave him that character, right? No, no. He brilliantly created that character. It was amazing.
- Hank Smith: 01:16 Brilliantly, brilliantly. This story is about him, and this is after he gained some fame. John, I'm not a big TV watcher. I'll watch TV with my wife and kids in the evening, but a long time ago I came home from teaching seminary one afternoon, and John, I got to

tell you, not that this is super significant to this story, but it is for me. I just did not at that time of day, ever turn on the television. You get home from work and there's plenty to do. I got home and Sarah wasn't there, and for some crazy reason I decided to turn on the television and on came this talk show. The talk show host said, "We'd like to welcome to the show, Jonathan Heder." I knew automatically. I'm like, "Oh, I know that this actor is a member of the church. Wow, how cool is this? This must happen all the time that members of the church get invited on a national popular talk show."

- John Bytheway: 02:11 Happens all the time, right?
- Hank Smith: 02:12 I just happened to run into it on this one day that I turned on the television. Jonathan comes on and he's sitting with this talk show host, and she really wants to talk about his religion. He's there, I think, to talk about a movie. She is more interested in him being a member of the Church of Mormon, at that time.
- 02:30 He sits down and they start talking. The talk show host said, "You're Mormon, aren't you?" And he said, "Yeah, yeah, I am." And she said, "So you don't drink?" "Nope." "You don't smoke." "Nope." "You don't swear." And he's like, "Well, I try not to." And she said, "How do you do that being in Hollywood? How do you do that? The parties around Hollywood." And he said something funny he said, "Well, usually I don't get invited."
- 02:56 That probably should have been it. But John, she did not want to let this go. She kept pushing and pushing him. I don't know if he got uncomfortable with it. He seemed to think ... In my mind I could see him saying, "Well, I'd like to move on from this topic and talk about why I came here." And she said, "Well, how do you do that? How do you not drink? How do you not smoke? How do you not break the law of chastity? How do you not do all these things?" And he kept saying funny answers.
- 03:22 And then there was this moment. He wasn't upset, he wasn't angry. He just ended the conversation when he said, "Well look, it's who I am. It's not that hard." I loved that. Aren't you tempted by smoking and drinking and doing drugs and all of these immoral things? Aren't you tempted? He simply said, "I'm actually not super tempted because it's who I am."
- 03:46 Isn't that interesting with Moroni seven, John?
- John Bytheway: 03:49 Mm-hmm.

Hank Smith: 03:49 We will become something. When he comes again, we will know him. We shall see him as he is because we are like him.

John Bytheway: 03:57 And that's what President Oaks reminded us of in that talk, the challenge to become. It's not just to know what to do, but when you know what to do and you do what you know, begin to become something different. And for Jonathan, it was like, "It's who I am."

Hank Smith: 04:13 It's who I am. It's who I am.

John Bytheway: 04:13 So good.

Hank Smith: 04:14 I've lived my life in a way that it becomes very natural. At first, things are tempting, I think when we're young, John. But as we get older, it becomes who we are. Our temptations change. We want to become more patient and more gentle, and maybe that's the idea of the Lord has is, yeah, as you change, these temptations will not be as attractive.

John Bytheway: 04:35 I love what you said, Hank. He wasn't, "You should be this way," or he wasn't, "Everybody should be this way." Just, "No, it's who I am."

Hank Smith: 04:43 Yeah, it's who I am. It's not as difficult as you make it sound.

John Bytheway: 04:44 As you might think.

Hank Smith: 04:46 If anybody knows Jonathan out there, or Jonathan in case you're listening, I have no idea, thank you for your goodness.

John Bytheway: 04:52 For being who you are.

Hank Smith: 04:55 Yeah. Thank you for being who you are. We'd love to have you join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're on Moroni seven, eight, and nine, like I said, and we're with Dr. Mark Ogletree, who opens up these chapters in wonderful ways. I thought to myself, "I am going to be a better father from what we heard from him." We hope you'll all come join us over there. And then come back next week, we'll do another followHIM Favorites.