

**followHIM**

**Episode 111: Dr. Lisa Tait**  
**Doctrine and Covenants 23-26**  
*“Strengthen the Church”*

**Show Notes**

**Podcast General Description:**

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

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

**Podcast Episode 111 Description:**

**Part 1:**

Discover why Samuel Smith is as stalwart as William Smith is reticent with our guest Dr. Lisa Olsen Tait. Hank, John, and Dr. Tait introduce us to the first three branches of the Church and these early Saints' efforts to carry their crosses, learn the will of the Lord, and begin to weary and wear out their lives in service. They examine the concept of common consent and the rights of women and voting in the early Church.

**Part 2:**

Part II is a deep dive into Emma Hale Smith's personality, abilities, and role in establishing the early Church. Emma is educated, adept, and gifted. She completes Joseph and enables him to accomplish the Lord's work. We learn how Emma was consistently supported and encouraged

by Lucy Mack Smith, who reminds us that Emma constantly and consistently served those around her. See a new side of Emma Hale Smith with our expert, Dr. Lisa Olsen Tait, as well as reviewing her better-known accomplishments of creating a hymnal, acting as scribe, and lending her abilities to establishing the Church in this dispensation

## Timecode:

### Part 1

- *00:00* Introduction
- *01:10* Dr. Lisa Olsen Tait Bio
- *04:44* Samuel Smith's Conversion Story
- *07:15* Samuel Smith's Death Mentioned
- *09:40* Joseph Knight Encouraged to Pray Vocally by the Lord
- *12:39* Joseph Knights Asks to Have His Own Visionary Experience
- *14:59* The Church is Like an Infant--Needing Lots of Assistance
- *16:50* Baptisms Occur and is Perceived as Disruption of the Peace by Locals
- *20:57* The Adversary Perceives Joseph and Early Saints as Disturbers
- *24:03* The Lord Tells Them They Shall Have Many Afflictions
- *28:43* Emma and Joseph Told They They Will Have to Rely on Others
- *34:27* Section 24 Like Jacob 5
- *40:31* The Bible is the Lens Through Which the Early Saints Consider Revelation
- *45:49* Women Vote in Councils
- *48:59* Sustaining Someone is in the Future

### Part 2

- *00:00* Part II Begins
- *00:35* Emma Hale Smith Introduction
- *06:21* Joseph Smith Courts Emma Hale
- *10:27* Emma's Baptism
- *12:25* The Lord Reminds Emma She is His Daughter
- *16:27* Emma's Unflinching Strength and Service in Illinois
- *17:09* The Lord's Message Applies to All of Us
- *19:09* Emma is Called an Elect Lady
- *22:59* Joseph Mentions Emma's Ordination
- *29:29* The Lord Doesn't Promise Emma Wealth
- *32:49* The Deceitfulness of Riches
- *35:42* A Book of Hymns is Begun by Emma Hale Smith and W.W. Phelps

- 39:48 Emma's Love of the Savior Expressed by Her Choice of Hymns
- 42:37 Cleave Unto the Covenants
- 44:05 Joseph Asks Emma About Walls in Jerusalem
- 49:03 Dr. Lisa Olsen Tait Shares Her Testimony and Why She Studied History

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## **Biographical Information:**



Lisa Olsen Tait was an adjunct professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University when this was written. Lisa Olsen Tait recently completed a PhD in English at the University of Houston, with a dissertation on Susa Young Gates, the *Young Woman's Journal*, and transitional Mormonism in the 1890s. Her research focuses on late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century literature and culture, with a special interest in women writers, popular fiction, and Mormon magazines.

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**followHIM**  
**Episode 111: Part I**  
**Dr. Lisa Olsen Tait**

**Doctrine and Covenants 23-26**

Hank Smith:	<u>00:00</u>	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their <i>Come, Follow Me</i> studies. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:09</u>	And I'm John, Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:10</u>	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:11</u>	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:13</u>	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:15</u>	As together, we followHIM.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:18</u>	My friends welcome to another episode of followHIM, a podcast designed to help individuals and families with their <i>Come, Follow Me</i> studies. I'm here with my co-host, John, Bytheway. We're back, John.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:31</u>	Yeah, I'm so excited to be back again.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:33</u>	We would love it if you like our podcast to go and rate it, review it. If you don't like it, go ahead and send that to us, and we'll go ahead, and we'll put that on there for you, eventually, sometime. We also have a Facebook page, now, John. We're getting mainstream here, and we have an Instagram account. So, please go look up, followHIM on those social media platforms, and you'll get extras and quotes and awesome things from the podcast. John, we have another expert here with us today. Tell us who is joining us.
John Bytheway:	<u>01:10</u>	Oh, we're so happy today to have Dr. Lisa Olsen Tait. And she has a Ph.D. from the University of Houston and is a historian and writer, and specialist in women's history at the Church History Department. She is a volume editor and historical reviewer on Saints, that book you all have, and is working on a team to write a history of the Young Women's Organization, which will be published in a couple of years. She has

contributed to the Revelations in Context series, which is on your Gospel Library app. You got to get that and other Church History Department projects.

- John Bytheway: 01:49 Before joining the department in 2013, she taught Doctrine and Covenants at classes at Brigham Young University. She also leads the Mormon Women's History Initiative Team, an independent group that sponsors scholarship and networking in the field. She and her husband, Mike, have three sons and a very special daughter Kaylee and two dogs. So, we're really, really happy to have you with us, Dr. Tait.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 02:14 Thank you. Glad to be here.
- Hank Smith: 02:16 former guests, brother Steve Harper Dr. Steve Harper, who just couldn't tell me enough about Lisa and how much fun she is too. You have a lot to live up to. Not only are you brilliant, you're also fun.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 02:37 It was Steve saying that so you'll have to gauge what level of fun that means.
- Hank Smith: 02:43 Right, what fun means. That's funny. This week, we are looking at Sections 23 through 26. In Section 23 it's still April of 1830, the Church is not even a month old. It's our little tiny baby Church. Joseph is receiving instruction here for five men, and we've heard of most of these names before. We have Oliver Cowdery who we've talked about, Hyrum Smith who we talked about with Section... What was that? Section 11? Joseph Smith, Sr. The prophet's father, we looked at him in Section 4, Joseph Knight, Sr. as a lot of our guests have said the Knights are pretty much the Second Family in the Church.
- Hank Smith: 03:31 But a new name comes up we've never seen before. We've talked about him before and this is Samuel Smith. Can you tell us, Dr. Tait, can you tell us about Samuel, what we know about him. What his relationship was like with Joseph and how he felt about the work?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 03:50 Samuel Smith is Joseph's younger brother, he's just younger than Joseph. I think the next son in line in the family. He comes to visit Joseph and Oliver in May of 1829, shortly after their experience with John the Baptist, where they've received the priesthood and they've baptized each other. Joseph's History says that they had begun to reason, I think what they mean is talk about the scriptures with a few people and start paving the way for introducing this idea of the Restoration to others.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 04:25 Joseph says that they informed Samuel of what the Lord was about to do for the children of men and reasoned with him out of the Bible, and showed him some of the work that they had translated and labored to persuade him concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was now about to be revealed in its fullness. Joseph says that Samuel was not very easily persuaded of these things. But after much inquiry and explanation, retired to the woods in order that by secret and fervent prayer he might obtain of a merciful God, wisdom to enable him to judge for himself.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 05:01 This younger brother then, this brother that's just younger than Joseph, he would be about 21 years old, and he isn't going to just accept everything at face value. So, he seeks out this experience for himself and receives his own witness, and as a result, he becomes the third person to be baptized in this dispensation. He receives his baptism shortly after that.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 05:31 That's where things are at when the Church is organized. Samuel, of course, being part of the Smith family, they're going to have a really key role to play. I think they all know that, they've been aware of Joseph's experiences, at least some of them. So, Samuel is poised to play a role here. The Lord tells him here in Section 23, in this revelation though, he says that "his calling will be to exhortation, to strengthen the church," which the church is just barely coming into being at this point. "But thou art not yea called to preach before the world."
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 06:14 That will change and by early in 1831, Samuel is going to travel to Kirtland, just shortly behind Oliver Cowdery, Parley Pratt, the first missionaries that stop and introduced the gospel in Kirtland and Samuel follows them shortly thereafter. For these, especially these first few years of the Church's history, Samuel is just a prolific missionary. He walks all over the Eastern United States preaching the Book of Mormon, sharing the gospel and becomes... I believe it's he who was instrumental in introducing the Book of Mormon to Brigham Young's family, and instrumental in the conversion at Brigham and then Heber C. Kimball and some of these important early converts to the church. He's going to have a major role to play.
- Hank Smith: 07:05 I was going to say, placing that Book of Mormon with Brigham's family, that had some impact on the Church.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 07:12 It had some implications, yeah.
- Hank Smith: 07:15 I think members of the Church are going to be somewhat acquainted with Joseph and Hyrum. But I hope that... One of my

hopes in the podcast was that Samuel will become more important to people. He's going to die about the same time as Joseph and Hyrum, what, six weeks after them, or maybe a little bit longer or two months after them, right?

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 07:41 Yeah. I know, at least traditionally, his death was ascribed possibly two injuries that he suffered in writing all night and the stress of informing the community about the death of his brothers. Whatever the case was, he doesn't outlive Joseph and Hyrum, so we don't know... His story doesn't continue in the Church History after that.
- Hank Smith: 08:13 I told my daughter's best friend, her name is Holland. As I told this story, she said, "He deserves a statue at Carthage Jail. I want him to have a statue there." I told her that I'd put this on the podcast, that those who are in charge of the statues, there needs to be a statue of Samuel there, Carthage Jail.
- John Bytheway: 08:35 I was wondering, did he ever marry, Samuel?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 08:38 He did.
- Hank Smith: 08:40 He marries Mary Bailey, they have four kids.
- John Bytheway: 08:44 Oh, another thing I like in this one is that earlier in Section 11, Hyrum is told, "Seek not to declare my word but to obtain it." It sounds like they switch gears here in verse three. Am I reading that right?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 08:59 Yeah. "My tongue is loosed," the lord says to Hyrum." Isn't that interesting where Section 11 was so restraining, hold on, hold on. Now, he's saying you're "calling us to exhortation, to strengthen the church to continue. . . ."
- Hank Smith: 09:15 I love that.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 09:16 It's like green light, Hyrum.
- Hank Smith: 09:18 Hyrum has been waiting, waiting, waiting. Now, it's time.
- John Bytheway: 09:23 I also had another question about in verse six, it speaks of Joseph Knight Sr.
- Hank Smith: 09:28 What's interesting here for me is that all of these guys receive a message that they are under no condemnation, except for Joseph Knight. It seems that maybe he's dragging his feet a little bit in jumping in.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 09:44 Yeah, verse six has always been interesting to me. Where it says, "You must take up your cross in the which you must pray vocally before the world as well as in secret." I don't know that we have any other sources that would explicitly help us know where this is coming from, but I don't know if we need them, I think this is an example of how these revelations speak to people in their most intimate and personal thoughts and feelings of their heart, the Lord is showing that he knows their heart.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 10:15 This expression of "take up your cross" is interesting, isn't it? Of do something that's hard for you, do something that will be a sacrifice, that will show your commitment. Perhaps Joseph Knight was not particularly comfortable praying and speaking publicly at this point in his life. The revelation challenges him to do that. I think it's interesting how revelation often does that. Our patriarchal blessings do that sometimes, or just the promptings of the spirit that we get, that we have to take up our cross, we have to do what's difficult, we have to be willing to sacrifice our fears and our discomfort in order to follow the lord and to do what he would have us do and grow into what he can have us become.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 11:11 Now, in Joseph Knight's recollection, he mentions, and this would be a couple of months later, after this revelation is received, he observed some baptisms, and I think these are the ones we'll talk about here shortly with where Emma is baptized, and it's in a stream that's dammed up on his property in Colesville. He says that he, he watched as these people went forth and were baptized. It was the first time he had seen anyone be baptized in what he calls "the new and everlasting covenant." He said, "I had some thoughts to go forward, but I had not read the Book of Mormon and I wanted to examine a little more. I being a Restorer, and had not examined as much as I wanted to."
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 11:56 He wants to really investigate this. "But I should have felt better if I had gone forward, but I went home and was baptized in June with my wife and family." Gosh, maybe I'm wrong about that, maybe those baptisms were some of these even earlier ones, but this shows Joseph Knight... He's a full on supporter of Joseph Smith, we'll talk about this as well, how much material and temporal help he's given him. But he is an independent Yankee kind of man, and he wants to be sure, before he moves forward. It's just a lovely little glimpse into his soul and his personality.

Hank Smith: 12:39 I also like how you're talking... You said this about Samuel as well, that he's going to go find out for himself. It seems that all of these, we've talked about this with Oliver, we've talked about this with Hyrum that they weren't just all in at first, it was, I'm going to have my own revelation. I think Joseph, to his credit was, "Yes, you can, go talk to God yourself. You don't have to talk to God through me all the time, go talk to him, yourself." I really appreciate that about Joseph Smith, is that he's saying, "I've had my own first vision experience, but you need to have your own visionary experience." The focus was not on what he had seen, but what on others could see, if they went to God themselves. I think that's extraordinary.

John Bytheway: 13:25 I think, too, I was reading a commentary, the Robinson and Garrett commentary, and they mentioned that Joseph Knight was, before this, a Universalist and may not have sensed the importance of baptism or something. Maybe that's why in verse seven, as Lisa just talked about, it says, "It is your duty to unite with the true church." This was in April of 1830, and as Lisa said, June of 1830, he went ahead and submitted to baptism.

Hank Smith: 13:56 Yeah, that's fantastic.

John Bytheway: 13:58 I just think I felt a little bit of envy, as I'm reading this, going, Oliver again, boy, how many do you get, how many sections of the Doctrine and Covenants... We each love to have, unless they're to condemnatory or whatever, but some of these same characters are being talked to again, and it sounds like, kind of a, "Yep, you're doing fine. Yep, you're doing fine." Message at some of those. Maybe I'm oversimplifying, but I like that. Oliver, you're doing great. Hyrum, you're doing a great and little bit of encouragement, perhaps.

Hank Smith: 14:31 Yeah.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 14:32 Well, and this verse two in 23, "Make known my calling unto the church." This is building off of the revelation we have a Section 21 where the lord tells Oliver that he's an elder to the Church. He's the first preacher of this Church. Again, the lord is saying, take this calling, and run with it, Oliver, you're good to go.

Hank Smith: 14:58 Yeah. I really just appreciate this. That here's our little tiny church, I call it little baby church here in its first month, and you got the Lord going, "All right, here we go. Let's get underway, let's get started." I remember me with my little children, it was a lot of encouragement, a lot of let's try new things, let's get going here."

Hank Smith: 15:23 I really like what you said with Joseph Knight, Lisa, do what is difficult. Well, I shouldn't say I like it, I feel it. I feel it because there's a lot of times... I like to stay in my comfort zone, I don't know about you too, but I like to stay where I feel very safe. Let me teach a Gospel Doctrine class, and I'm good to go. But ask me to administer a program, John, I know you served as Bishop, ask me to do something like that, and I think the Lord is going to have to say, "You're going to have to do some difficult things here."

Dr. Lisa Tait: 15:55 "Take up your cross."

Hank Smith: 15:57 Yeah, and unite yourself with the true church. I think sometimes, maybe... I'm definitely a member of the Church, but I don't know if I've fully united unless I'm willing to do those difficult things that come with new callings and new experiences. I remember, John, when you were called as Bishop, you were pretty terrified, right? But that was part of uniting with the Church, I think, is accepting that calling.

John Bytheway: 16:30 Yeah, that's a good word for it. I feel like I had it in me and all that sort of thing. I appreciate reading about these. The Lord's not telling him, "I'm going to remove your trials and make this easy." As Lisa said, it's more like, take up your cross. Here we go. Wow.

Hank Smith: 16:49 Here we go.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 16:50 In July of 1830, Joseph and Emma are back in Harmony, Pennsylvania, after a really rough experience towards the end of June. They were in Colesville. On the 26th of June, they had dammed a stream, I think it's on Joseph Knight's property, where they were going to perform some baptisms, and the opposition in the area had become so intense that some people came and broke up that dam, and they were not able to do the baptisms that day. So, they had to dam it again. Then Emma and a few others are baptized on the 28th of June, which I believe was a Monday.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 17:35 As they were preparing to have a meeting where Emma would be confirmed along with the others who were baptized at that time, a constable comes and arrests Joseph, for being a disorderly person by preaching the Book of Mormon. It's interesting that, this small little flock of the Church is just minding their own business doing what they think they need to do. Somehow, other people come in and disrupt it. Yet, it's Joseph Smith, who's the disorderly-

Hank Smith: 18:12 You're the disorderly person.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 18:12 Yeah. He's hauled off, he's taken to court, it's an all day and all night ordeal, he's acquitted. Then as soon as he's let go, another Constable from another county comes and arrests him, and he's hauled off to court again. Meanwhile, Emma has taken refuge at the home of her sister, which is not too far off, and is leading some of the members of the Church there in prayer and supplication on behalf of Joseph.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 18:45 The upshot of all of this is that they're not able to hold that confirmation meeting at the time. Joseph and Emma returned back to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where their farm is, and then these revelations, Section 24, 25, 26 are going to come shortly after they get back to harmony. It's been a rough go, let's put it that way.

Hank Smith: 19:17 The very beginnings, it's not smooth sailing here for these little branches. The Lord does say in verse three, you've got basically three little branches of the Church. You've got Colesville, which is down by Harmony, you've got Fayette, which is where the Whitmers are-

Dr. Lisa Tait: 19:33 Whitmers are.

Hank Smith: 19:34 And Manchester where the Smith Farm is.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 19:37 Right.

Hank Smith: 19:37 You've got your three tiny little branches of the Church and they're already receiving some pretty intense persecution, which doesn't make a lot of sense for a tiny little church, to all of a sudden people up in arms against it. Which to me, tells us about the work of the Adversary, he's going to crush this thing, going to attempt to crush it before it even can grow some legs.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 20:03 Nip it in the bud.

Hank Smith: 20:05 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 20:06 I think when we have that same feeling, like this doesn't make sense, it's like, yeah, then this must really be something. I feel like you do, here's a testimony of it, why would it be opposed if somebody on their own property makes a little dam of a river to have a baptism, why would that bother you? Apparently the Adversary knew this is the beginning of something big.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 20:33 It's kind of the same question that Joseph will later write in his History, when he recounts the story of his first vision. It's caused me a lot of reflection why this little obscure boy that I was would call forth such opposition from these important people, and why did they even take notice of me? That's going to be the story all the way along.

Hank Smith: 20:57 There's one point in his history, and we didn't cover this in the history, but I'm glad you brought this up, Lisa, he says, "It seems as though... " This is Joseph Smith History, verse 20. "It seems as though the adversary was aware, at a very early period of my life that I was destined to prove a disturber and an annoyer of his kingdom. Why would the powers of darkness combine against me? Why the opposition and persecution that arose against me almost in my infancy?"

Hank Smith: 21:23 That can be said about the Church as well, that even in its infancy, it is receiving severe opposition and persecution. What did you say, John? Just a couple of believers getting together to have a baptism-

John Bytheway: 21:37 To have a little meeting on our own property. I've always loved that line, and I think Sherry Dew even gave a talk about being annoyers and disturbers. That kind of thing really got the attention of the Adversary, apparently, even though to us, it doesn't make sense. You're looking at like, why would you care?

Hank Smith: 21:58 Yeah. Some of the teenagers listening would probably agree that they have little brothers and sisters that are disturbers and annoyers.

John Bytheway: 22:07 What are some of the things that are remarkable, some of the things that you put red pencil under or whatever in 24, and 26. For me, one of them is verse two, and Joseph's willingness to have this out there.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 22:23 Yeah. It's fascinating, isn't it? How the Lord starts out by saying, "I've lifted thee up out of thine afflictions." Which is probably at least a direct reference to this recent experience. But then in the very next verse, "Nevertheless, thou art not excusable in thy transgressions. Go thy way and sin no more." Again, this is the Lord speaking to Joseph in a very personal way. Presumably, Joseph knew what those were at the time. I think that's the Lord's way of dealing with us. He'll lift us up out of our afflictions, and he'll reprove us times with sharpness, when that's what we need to hear.

Hank Smith: 23:05 This also shows Joseph's sincerity. Like, well, the Lord said it, it's going in the book. If it was me, I'd say, "Let's start at verse three."

John Bytheway: 23:14 Could we edit that part? Do we have to put that in?

Hank Smith: 23:18 That was meant just for me, not for everybody else.

John Bytheway: 23:21 Everybody to read about my transgression.

Hank Smith: 23:23 But he's sincere. This was the Lord speaking, it goes in the revelation.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 23:29 It's one of the interesting things about the revelations, isn't it? The voice of these revelations. Joseph, presumably, is literally physically speaking these words and someone is writing them down. But Joseph himself is not present in the revelations as a narrator. As Richard Bushman has said, "When rebukes are handed out, he is just as likely as anyone to receive one along with everybody else." It is really interesting.

John Bytheway: 24:02 Yeah. I look at verse eight, how would you like to have verse eight said to you, "Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many."

Dr. Lisa Tait: 24:13 He's probably feeling like I've already had many, thank you very much.

John Bytheway: 24:17 Could we change that to, thou shalt have a few?

Dr. Lisa Tait: 24:19 Or, you have had many already. Again, it's July, Joseph Smith is a farmer. It's a farming economy. In verse three, the Lord tells him, "After thou has sowed thy fields." Now, I'm not an expert on 19th century farming practices, but July seems a little late to be sowing your fields, and it's because he's been building up the Church, it's because he's been fulfilling his calling and doing the work of the Church and the work of the Lord, that he's literally not been able to get back to his farm and sow his fields.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 25:02 In verse three, the Lord tells him to go to these churches, these, as we would say, now, branches of the Church, and they shall support thee, and tells him to continue in his calling, "Continue in calling upon God in my name and writing the things which shall be given thee by the comforter and expounding all scriptures unto the church."

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 25:23 One thing we ought to make notice of is that in June of 1830, amidst everything else that's going on, Joseph receives the revelation that we have, as Chapter 1 of the Book of Moses. He's actually launching into this Joseph Smith Translation process at the same time that all this other stuff is going on. The Lord's telling him, "Keep going, writing the things which shall be given thee by the Comforter, expounding all scriptures under the church."
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 25:55 One thing to know about, especially these early revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants is when they say "scriptures," they mean the Bible, for the most part. In this culture, the scriptures were the Bible. We have no records about the Book of Moses and its reception. We don't know anything about how Joseph came up with the idea or the commission to study the Bible and do the translation of it, that becomes the JST. But this verse may be a reference to that in some way.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 26:29 But he tells him, "You shall devote all thy services in Zion, and in this, thou shalt have strength." Then verse nine, "In temporal labors, thou shalt not have strength, for this is not my calling." The Lord is setting out here, the circumstances and expectations that Joseph can have in terms of his life. He isn't going to get rich, the Church is to support him.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 26:57 The Smith family was a hardworking, independent family. They weren't the type of people to go asking for handouts and asking for other people to support them. That's going to be maybe something that's going to be difficult for Joseph and certainly Emma, as we'll talk about here in a minute. To say, "In temporal labors, thou shalt not have strength." I've heard some people joke about this, as like, Joseph is no good at business or whatever. I don't think that's what it is saying here. It's just saying, your calling is to the Church, your calling is to do the work of God, and that is not where you're going to have your time and your energy and your greatest ability to put your efforts into, not in the temporal labors.
- Hank Smith: 27:45 I remember, John used to say this as Bishop, he would say, "My time is not my own." I think Joseph could probably say that from April of 1830, and even before that, onward, "My time is not my own. I cannot go sow my fields, I cannot go and make an income." Because, you remember President Hinckley said this, "The life of the President of the Church belongs to the Church." I remember him saying that, it belongs to the Church. It's almost as if you're getting that from the Lord, that you're not going to be a farmer really a lot anymore, brother. All thy service. All seems like a pretty high percentage word, all the service goes to

Zion, and that's where you're going to have your strength, your energy. I like that you said that, that's where you're going to be effective. Temporal labors, you're going to have to rely on others.

- John Bytheway: 28:42 I'm really glad that we have Lisa here today, because I'm trying to think, what does your spouse think when you are told that by the Lord? "What? We're going to have to rely on others all of our lives?" How does that make Emma feel? I love that she gets some instruction from the Lord coming up here, because I just wondered how that would make her feel. No, you're not going to be any good at that. Well, I'm overstating it, but that's not where your focus is.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 29:16 Well, this is where I've always felt that Section 24 and 25 go together. Because Section 24 sets up the circumstances that the revelation to Emma is going to address. We can talk about that more in a minute. But if you think about this already, again, going back to Joseph Knight and his recollections, he talks about how several times when Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Knight came to visit him or the Smiths went to visit him.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 29:52 But anyway, Joseph Knight came to see that Joseph was in need or in want, as he would say, and he provides shoes, \$3, paper, a barrel of mackerel, some taters as he says, potatoes. Joseph literally has gotten already through the translation of the Book of Mormon because of the support of Joseph Knight, and that has been a demonstration of this dynamic that this revelation is talking about, the Church is going to support thee. He's going to have to learn to accept that, and the Church themselves as it says, "If they receive thee not, I will send upon them a cursing instead of a blessing." The Church is going to have to understand that this is one of their responsibilities. If they want what the prophet can give them, they're going to have to make sure he can eat and that he can be supported in being able to fulfill his calling.
- Hank Smith: 30:54 As I read Section 24, it reminded me a lot of Matthew, Chapter 10, when the Savior calls his Apostles, he's saying the workman... In that chapter, he says, "The workman is worthy of his meat." What you get from Matthew 10, that I still get the feeling from Section 24 is you can have the expectation that I and the Church will care for you, when you give all your service to Zion, you can have the expectation that you will be taken care of, not just by miracles, but by members of the Church, and by me.

Hank Smith: [31:33](#) We're learning, this is the very beginnings of the Restoration, but we're learning a little bit about our future General Authorities, that this is the same idea that you give full time service, all your time is devoted here, and you can have the expectation that the Church and the Lord will take care of you, and that's the way it's going to work.

John Bytheway: [31:53](#) Yeah. Hank, you were remarking about my time as a Bishop, and I was just thinking, well, compared to what some people do, when do you get released if you're in the Quorum of the Twelve?

Hank Smith: [32:07](#) Right.

Dr. Lisa Tait: [32:11](#) I can tell you, in my job, I have the opportunity to work with some of our leading brethren, and they truly do consecrate their lives. It's been amazing to me, as I've interacted with some of them to see the way that their lives do totally belong to the Lord, and to the Church.

Hank Smith: [32:30](#) I had a private conversation with one of them once and he said, "The other day, I looked around the table... " This was years ago, he said, "I looked around the table, and there were a couple of wheelchairs, a couple of oxygen tanks." He thought, "Well, at least I know my future, because I will end up right there, just handing my entire life over to the Church." In my watching President Hinckley going from remember Mr. Vitality, and then by the end, he was just... The same thing with President Monson, he was wiggling his ears, and then by the end, you remember, he couldn't stand up for the whole talk.

Hank Smith: [33:14](#) You just watched them, what Joseph Smith said, "Waste and wear out their lives in this service." Section 24 has become, just in this discussion, it's really become special to me, because we've watched this play out in the lives of our leaders.

John Bytheway: [33:33](#) Yeah, I'm glad you said that. We see a pattern of service for those who are called with those kinds of callings, that it's inspiring, because you think of what would motivate somebody to do that, unless they had a deep abiding, real testimony, to give your whole life to that until the day you die. It's amazing.

Dr. Lisa Tait: [33:56](#) Well, and in Joseph's case, not only, you're never going to get rich, you're going to have to rely on others to support you. By the way, people are going to throw you in jail, and you're going to have all these afflictions and it's going to be really hard. You can only guess, in July of 1830, Joseph is what, 24 years old, I

don't know how someone in their mid-20s reads this, but he certainly lives it out for the next 14 years.

- John Bytheway: [34:27](#) Yeah.
- Hank Smith: [34:27](#) I do want to mention one thing from D&C 24 really quick and that is, there's a reference, I think to Jacob 5 in verse 19, "For thou art called to prune my vineyard with a mighty pruning, yea, even this last time and do as you have ordained." If you go to Jacob 5, there's a great moment in Jacob 5, where it looks like the vineyard is done, they're going to burn the whole thing. "[inaudible 00:34:57] the fruit is bad." And the Lord says, "Let's try one more thing."
- Hank Smith: [35:05](#) It's like Steve Harper said, "John, this is a great movie, where the hero's got to make a choice. Let's try one more thing. He says, 'Call the servants.' In Jacob 5:61, 'Call the servants.' " It says in verse 70, that the "Lord called his servants, and they were few." I wanted it to be like, "They were amazing, they were awesome!" "They were few." But they go and work.
- Hank Smith: [35:37](#) He calls it, in Jacob 5:71, "This last time that I will nourish my vineyard." Then you see that in Doctrine and Covenants 24:19, "A mighty pruning, yea, even for the last time." We see in Jacob 5, how the rest works out that these few servants of the Lord, and especially in July of 1830, these few servants of the Lord, turn the entire vineyard around, and it starts to produce precious fruit.
- Hank Smith: [36:10](#) I like that little connection there, because I can see that the Lord is saying, "This is the beginning of this last time, but it really is going to work." This tiny little church, they've got to be thinking, us? What are we going to do? These three little towns of the Church right now, what are we going to do? The Lord can see, this is going to change the world.
- John Bytheway: [36:37](#) That footnote is right there it's footnote 19a to Jacob 5. I hope people will mark that and go there. One of the things when I teach Jacob 5, I love to have my students count how many times the Lord says things like, "What more could I have done for my vineyard?" Or, "It grieveth me that I should lose this tree." Just to get the sense, trees here are people, they are sons and daughters of God, and it changes the pain that you feel that the master of the vineyard has, when these are people.
- John Bytheway: [37:14](#) That phrase in verse 19, "I'm going to prune my vineyard." Pruning is not the same as, "I'm going to trim it and make it look

a little nicer." Pruning is I'm going to take off the bad vines and keep the good ones. Pruning can be a painful, painful process. I'm glad you brought that... That was very agrarian, Hank, what you just brought up there.

- Hank Smith: 37:34 We're learning these bigger words that our experts use. We had to warn Dr. Tait, try not to use multi-syllable words on John and me. Especially John.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 37:46 -Ph.D. language
- Hank Smith: 37:48 Right.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 37:49 He even calls it "a mighty pruning." I would just point out, and you guys would be better prepared to speak to this than I am. But I think we should remember too, I don't know how familiar these very earliest Saints are with the Book of Mormon at this period, but the language of vineyard and pruning, that's biblical language. It's so important to understand and recognize how much Joseph and the early saints understand what they are doing in terms of the Bible, they understand that they're living the Bible, they're living out what's in the Bible.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 38:27 There's another example of that here in Section 24, in verse 14, that the Lord has talked about requiring not miracles, casting out devils, healing the sick, and so forth. Then He says, "That the scriptures might be fulfilled." He goes on to talk about leaving a cursing instead of a blessing and so forth. If we look at those verses carefully, this is New Testament language. This is the same kind of instructions that Jesus gave to his disciples.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 38:59 Again, we have this sense that they're understanding this restoration, they're understanding what they're doing through the lens of the Bible, the scriptures, that they're fulfilling that. I think in Jacob, and we could talk about this for a long time, but in Jacob, he's also drawing on imagery and ideas about the world as the Lord's vineyard that comes from the prophets of the Old Testament. We're really putting all the dispensations together here, in this kind of language.
- Hank Smith: 39:31 You could go to like Isaiah 5 or II Nephi 15, it's like Isaiah's only parable, "I had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill and I did everything and it brought forth..." What does Terry Ball call it? He uses the Hebrew like [foreign language 00:39:46] It doesn't mean wild grapes, it means worthless, stinking things. It's funny. "I did everything I could, what more could I have done?" Boy, it ties beautifully to that. I'm glad you said that, Lisa, because

maybe they're going, "Hey, this sounds like Isaiah, we've got to go prune the vineyard."

- John Bytheway: [40:07](#) Matthew 10, there's, take no scrip, neither stay, new codes. This is all Matthew 10 language.
- Hank Smith: [40:14](#) Right. It made me think, are there a lot of poisonous snakes in the frontier or something, or is he saying that because that's very much biblical language? You'll notice that string of footnotes there from the Gospels about instructions given to the Twelve.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [40:31](#) If you read Wilford Woodruff's missionary journal about "wading through the swampy streams in the southern United States," I think they're probably worse than snakes involved there as well. It's a real key to engaging with the Doctrine and Covenants to recognize how much these revelations are drawing on, share language with the Bible, and how powerful that would have been for Joseph and the early Saints. For them, it's the lens that they're looking at this through, and that they're interpreting their experiences through. I think it's really important to understand that, and it's easy for us to miss it today, because our culture is not as biblically literate as theirs was.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [41:18](#) In the Church, we know the Book of Mormon really well now, probably more than we know the Bible. But it's really important. I think it's a key for understanding the Doctrine and Covenants.
- John Bytheway: [41:28](#) If you're using old fashioned paper scriptures, just look at the columns of footnotes, and how many are biblical on page 43 there, about these instructions. Thank you for saying that, Lisa.
- Hank Smith: [41:41](#) We'll get to this later, but when they leave for Ohio, they're going to relate it to the Exodus of the children of Israel, right?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [41:49](#) That's right.
- Hank Smith: [41:50](#) Leaving and the miracle where the ice parts. We'll talk about this later, but-
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [41:55](#) The endowment of power.
- Hank Smith: [41:59](#) You're right, these are biblical people.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [41:59](#) Yep.

Hank Smith: 42:01 Let's go to Section 26, and then we'll come back and we'll spend the rest of our time talking about Emma. In Section 26, the Lord is speaking to Oliver and John, and we're tying it in to Section 24, just because the heading does as well. The Lord says this, "I say unto you, that you shall let your time be devoted to the studying of the scriptures, and to preaching and to confirming the Church at Colesville." That's down in Pennsylvania by Harmony, "And performing your labors on the lands such as required until after you shall go West to hold the next conference. Then it shall be made known what you shall do. All these things shall be done by common consent in the church, by much prayer and faith for all things you shall receive by faith, amen."

Hank Smith: 42:47 We have a tiny little Section here in Section 26. Doesn't tell them to do much more than you would expect. But then he adds this, "All things shall be done by common consent in the church." Do either of you have any thoughts on what that means for the Church moving forward?

Dr. Lisa Tait: 43:08 Yeah, this principle of common consent in the Church is very interesting that it's here from the very beginning. There's actually a whole context for this in American Christianity at the time, where in some churches, they've established this principle that this is one of the ways of governing a church or of legitimating the decisions and the actions of a church is by what's called common consent. It goes along with the early American experience. I'm going to use a PhD. word here, the democratization of religion in the United States, where common people are becoming more involved, are having more opportunity to lead, to preach, to influence the direction of religion at the time.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 44:05 Joseph would have understood this concept of common consent in that larger context of religion of the day. I'll just add here, if you're interested in knowing more about this, the Joseph Smith Papers Podcast that has just been released on the Restoration of the Priesthood has an excellent discussion about this idea of common consent and where it came from in early America. The whole podcast is excellent. I'm going to just put in a pitch for that there.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 44:38 Basically, the idea is that the members of the Church can vote, can signify their support of what's done in the Church. That's the idea of common consent.

Hank Smith: 44:50 This is totally different from their European heritage, where they were-

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 44:57 Especially from the older what we would call “High Church” today, that's very much dependent on ordained ministers and educated clergy and so forth. As I say, there is a context for it in the early United States where this idea of common consent wasn't original to Joseph Smith, and to the Church, but it definitely aligns them with that more democratic streak of Christianity that's taking hold in the United States at the time.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 45:26 Now, I can tell you that over time, there have been various claims made about this common consent that it... For example, one of the women that I used to do a lot of study on, and she's writing in the early 20th century, and she likes to claim that this means that women could vote in the Church from the very beginning and that Joseph Smith was the first to give women the right to vote in that sense.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 45:50 It's actually a little bit more complicated than that, it seems at first that most of the conferences and places where common consent would have been applied to official members of the Church, which at first were men who held the priesthood. But by the time you get to Nauvoo, women are voting, offering a sustaining vote in Conferences, and so forth.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 46:13 Certainly by the Nauvoo period into the middle of the 19th century, this does give women at least a vote or it does give women the opportunity to make their support known and to vote on church matters in some capacity.
- Hank Smith: 46:35 Wow. That's absolutely fascinating. We can see that this is still important to us. At General Conference, we're still saying all in favor, right? In our wards, we're still doing the all in favor. Sometimes those of us who are sitting there going, what do you think I'm going to say? Of course, I'm going to support the Stake basketball coach, right? I'm happy to. But it seems like this is still important to us, this common consent that everybody gets a say.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 47:05 I think that's evolved over time. It's been understood and taken different forms over the time. If you go back into the 19th century records, you will find examples of people voting against of it being more of a vote, than the way that we think about it. Now, I think we've come to think about it now more in a personal sense of our covenants to support the Lord and support the Church and its leaders. The question, as we raise our hands in common consent now, is, will I support this... It's more of a personal commitment than being an absolute vote, but it is still, should we call it a pressure relief mechanism within the Church where there is the opportunity to let it be known if

you know something that maybe the Bishop doesn't know, or you have concerns, there is this mechanism for making that known.

- Hank Smith: [48:11](#) I really like this. I like to compare it to when Paul says that the Church is a body, and that the body needs every piece, and the head doesn't say to the hand, we don't need you. And the hand doesn't say to the feet, we don't need you. I often like to say, in that paradigm, in that way, the head can receive information from the rest of the body, right? If the hand is hurting, it sends that information up to the head and says, "Hey, I'm really hurting here."
- Hank Smith: [48:38](#) One of the ways that I think the head of the Church, according to this way of thinking, can receive revelation is from the body of the Church, can receive that information, up from the body of the Church and that you matter, you matter in this organization. We need you. I really like that idea.
- John Bytheway: [49:01](#) Going back to the sustaining, I was a little bit of a stickler when I was Bishop for the wording that doing this isn't sustaining. Doing this is signifying that you will sustain future tense, throughout their calling type of a thing. I wanted to make sure if people knew that, that's not sustaining somebody, that's just saying that you're making this covenant of common consent that you will sustain them, even if you know other people who could be better at that calling, you don't know what the lord had in mind, but you will signify it by the raise of the... I liked the language and I liked that it was a future commitment.
- Hank Smith: [49:46](#) Please join us for Part II of this podcast.

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Episode 111: Dr. Lisa Tait Part II

Doctrine and Covenants 23-26

- Hank Smith: 00:03 Welcome to Part Two of this week's podcast. Right now, we come to one of the most often-quoted sections, Section 25 about Emma Smith. I'm excited, really excited to hear from Lisa because this is your area. What do we know about Emma and her childhood and her eventually marrying Joseph? What do you suppose these first few years of their marriage have been like? We'd just love to hear what you know about this, Lisa, and how you can help us understand this.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 00:36 Yeah, Emma is someone that I find that members of the church really want to know about and want to know more about. She was just a little bit older than Joseph. She's born in 1804. Her parents are Isaac and Elizabeth Hale.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 00:57 She grows up in pretty comfortable circumstances. Her family's quite prosperous, here in this Susquehanna Valley in the Harmony, Pennsylvania area. Her father made a comfortable living in shipping meat and other merchandise down river to Philadelphia and Baltimore. I think he was known as quite a prolific hunter. Big game was a way of procuring meat at the time. They lived in a fashionable frame home that was sometimes called a mansion in the area, and lived in fine circumstances, so Emma received a really good education for her time and place. She liked to ride horses, she was good at canoeing, apparently, and she was very strong, very independent. She was a tall woman, I think about five foot nine. Very tall and strong and sturdy.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 01:56 Her family, evidently, was not particularly religious for some time but she was baptized into the Congregational Church as a baby, as a child. Then, as was the case in so many places in the United States in the early nineteenth century, there was schisms and splits and preachers who'd come through and religious revivals and so forth.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 02:27 At one point, Methodists, circuit riders, the preachers, the Methodist preachers came into the valley, and Emma, as a fairly young child. I don't know the exact age, maybe about seven years old, she finds religion, so to speak. She becomes

converted and she becomes a member of a class in the Methodist Episcopal Church. So, in these classes, she would have learned to read the scriptures, to receive instruction about the gospel.

- Dr. Lisa Tait:            03:03            Then, in 1812, so what... she would have been about eight years old, a Methodist circuit rider came through Harmony and was encouraging young people to go into the woods and pray, to have spiritual experiences. A local hunter reported that he found people in the woods praying all the time, when he was out trying to hunt.
- Dr. Lisa Tait:            03:28            In fact, there's a story told that at one point, Emma's father found her praying for him, that she was praying for the welfare of her father's soul. That really impressed him and brought him to have some kind of religious faith of his own.
- Dr. Lisa Tait:            03:46            So, that's a little bit about Emma's early life. She was well-educated, she was very smart, she was very strong, she was an independent... I was going to say independent-minded, that had a certain meaning in the nineteenth century, but she was an independent woman, independent thinker.
- Dr. Lisa Tait:            04:05            We kind of see that in her relationship with Joseph Smith, because he comes into the area as a young man with Josiah Stowell on this expedition to try to dig up the Spanish treasure, that Stowell is just convinced is there for the finding. Joseph ends up boarding with the Hale family when he is working for Stowell. Now, Isaac Hale will later write that Joseph Smith followed a business of which he could not approve. This was one of the reasons that he says he didn't take a shine to Joseph Smith, so to speak. There is some indication that maybe Hale himself had thought about looking for that Spanish treasure, so I don't know about that.
- Dr. Lisa Tait:            05:05            When Emma is 21 years old, this young man named Joseph Smith comes into the neighborhood and boards with her family. He's working for Josiah Stowell digging for the treasure. Apparently, Joseph is smitten with Emma immediately. He's really just head over heels for her. Apparently, she comes to have some feelings for him as well, even though her family is not at all in favor of this relationship. Again, she comes from a respectable, prosperous family and no doubt, they felt she could have done a lot better than this itinerant treasure-seeker and farmhand than Joseph Smith was, who, again, also was not very well-educated. The words, bitterly opposed, have been used to describe how her family felt about Joseph.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 05:59 But it's one of the oldest stories in the book, right? That true love will prevail. Stowell actually facilitates Joseph and Emma meeting, and so does Joseph Knight. He lets Joseph borrow his sleigh to, "Go and see his girl," as he puts it. Joseph and Emma are courting each other, or I guess Joseph is courting Emma as best as he can. He's not in Harmony anymore, I think he's up in Colesville, working for Joseph Knight or for Mr. Stowell, I can't remember the details in the moment.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 06:39 But Emma later tells her son. She says, "I was visiting at Mr. Stowell's and saw your father there." So, apparently they would meet each other up at Josiah Stowell's place since her parents didn't agree or didn't approve. Said, "I had no intention of marrying when I left home, but during my visit at Mr. Stowell's, your father visited me there. My folks were bitterly opposed to him and being importuned by your father." Now, importuned is a big word that means begged. "Being begged by your father. Cited by Mr. Stowell, who urged me to marry him, and preferring to marry him than to any other man I knew, I consented. We went to Squire Tarbell's and were married." So, in other words, they eloped. This is a time-honored practice of young people who were in love and their parents don't approve.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 07:33 So, they were married in January of 1827. They went from there to go and live with Joseph's parents up in Manchester in the Palmyra area in New York. That's where they were, then that Fall, when Joseph finally receives the plates in September. Of course, it's Emma who goes with him on that occasion.
- Hank Smith: 07:58 I love this so far. It seems that Joseph Smith in my studies, he just was not complete without her. That the moment she comes into his life, he not only becomes spiritually ready for the plates, he just grows up. Some of the things that Moroni's been begging him to do for the last four years, he does with Emma in his life.
- Hank Smith: 08:25 The importuning part reminded me so much of my own courtship, right, John? The begging part, the, "Please, please, I know this might not look good to you, but it looks amazing to me."
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 08:43 Yeah. Even throughout their lives, we have a few letters between Joseph and Emma. We have more that he wrote to her than that she wrote to him. But in those letters, his expressions of love and affection and longing for Emma are consistent and really beautiful.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 09:08 He writes to her, for example, when he is in Liberty Jail. He says, "If you want to know how much I want to see you, examine your feelings how much you want to see me. I would gladly walk from here to you barefoot and bareheaded to see you and think it a great pleasure and never count it toil." So, throughout their marriage, they definitely loved each other.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 09:33 In fact, in the same interview where she talks about their courtship, she tells her son that she and Joseph got along really well, that they didn't quarrel. "He knew that I wished for nothing but what was right. And as he wished for nothing else, we did not disagree. He usually gave some heed to what I had to say," she says. "It was quite a grievous thing to many that I had any influence with him." So, they definitely seemed to have had a partnership, and maybe even to a degree, that wasn't typical for a marriage in that period, where he gave heed to Emma's opinions and advice and feelings in a way that maybe wasn't expected for men in a marriage in that time.
- Hank Smith: 10:29 No. At this time, like you said, she is baptized in July. Is that where this revelation comes from? Post-baptism?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 10:38 Yeah. She's baptized in June, at the very end of June, and it's that occasion where someone's broken up the dam and then they have to re-dam the stream and then before she can be confirmed, Joseph is arrested. So, it's been a really intense experience for her just to get baptized. By the time they go back to Harmony where this revelation comes, she has not been confirmed yet and hasn't received the gift of the Holy Ghost. That figures into the revelation as well.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 11:11 We wish we knew more about the reasons for this revelation, like where did this come from? Was there a question that was asked? Was there some kind of perceived need that led Joseph to inquire? We just don't know. We don't know what the background was for this revelation but it is such a personal and beautiful response by the Lord to Emma's thoughts and feelings and needs and to her potential and her gifts and her future.
- Hank Smith: 11:48 Yeah. I love this section, one, just because of what it teaches and also that the Lord is no different with His daughters than His sons. He sounds the same. He doesn't say, "Well, hi Emma, yes, thanks for doing your work. Is there a boy there I can talk to?" He is really, He has a lot in store for her. He speaks the same to them. He even says, "All those who receive my gospel are sons and daughters in my kingdom." Beautiful.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 12:26 He addresses her as my daughter, which he'll do with Joseph. "My son." He'll say that many times in the revelations. There may be another layer here because Emma was so estranged from her own father that the Lord is reminding her, "You're my daughter, whatever your earthly relationships are, you are mine."

Hank Smith: 12:46 Yeah. I was just thinking as you were giving us Emma's background, how different her life would have been had she not married Joseph Smith. She stays on the farm, she inherits probably this wealth.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 13:00 Marries well.

Hank Smith: 13:03 Here she is. I have a quote from her mother-in-law, quote, "I have never seen a woman in my life who would endure every species of fatigue and hardship from month to month and from year to year, with that unflinching courage, zeal and patience, which Emma has ever done. She has been tossed upon the ocean of uncertainty, she has breasted the storms of persecution, and buffeted the rage of men and devils, which would have borne down almost any other woman." I wish my mother-in-law would say such wonderful things about me. That is a beautiful, a tribute to her.

John Bytheway: 13:46 I read that too and I thought, "This is pretty cool. This is a mother-in-law talking about her daughter-in-law." I loved how supportive and... I was thinking about this baptism where people come and interrupt it. I mean, it sounds like it's malicious, what they're trying to do. I always have thought we've put such emphasis recently, in recent years, on teaching the Savior's way. When I read the Bible, when the Savior was teaching, He had opposition there so many times. I'm thinking trying to have a baptism and make a beautiful memory and what do you have there? People opposing it and getting loud and obnoxious. And here's Lucy saying, "Hey, Emma, unflinching, doing this." I love that, I've read that too, Hank, and I really liked that. That made me feel like there must have been a friendship there. Maybe Lisa can speak to that of Lucy and Emma.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 14:50 For sure. Lucy makes that statement in her history that she dictates in about 1845, I think. In the year or two after the death of Joseph and Hyrum. So, I think we should note by that time, there is already some bitterness towards Emma, there's already some bad feelings, and so this statement that Lucy makes is meant to defend Emma, I think, within that context.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 15:21 Lucy does live with Emma in her last years, even after the Saints have gone west. So, Emma takes care of Lucy in her old age, which is a pattern for Emma throughout her life. She's always taking people in, she's always taking care of people, to the extent that she ever has resources to share, she's sharing them.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 15:43 In Kirtland, she and Elizabeth Ann Whitney put on a feast, a feast for the poor, where they made all kinds of food and invited those who were needy to come and partake and have plenty to eat. So, that's just one example of many that we could multiply of how Emma was such a generous... I think if you could have talked to the Saints in Nauvoo about her, that's what they would have said. That she was a great help to Joseph and she was a great help to the Saints in her unflinching, unfailing attempts to sucker those who needed it and to provide help to those who were in need.
- Hank Smith: 16:32 I mean, she crosses the frozen river to get from Missouri back into Illinois. I've read about when they first settled Nauvoo, and it was Commerce, Illinois, and everyone got so sick with the malaria that her home basically became a hospital. She's stepping over people inside the house and outside the house.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 16:54 Yeah, yeah. Those were the circumstances. That was not at all unusual for her.
- Hank Smith: 17:00 What do you see, Lisa, that we could use today, from the Lord's message to Emma?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 17:08 Well, we could go through every verse in this revelation. There's something rich in every verse. Before I apply it to myself, I always want to know what it meant for the person who's receiving it at the time. The Lord tells her, "I'll preserve thy life." We don't know how threatened she felt at various times, but there were certainly other times in her life when she could have felt that her life was in danger.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 17:43 In fact, let me read to you from the letter that she writes to Joseph. He's in Liberty Jail at this point, and she has had to make this flight from Missouri in the middle of winter with her four little children. She says, "The walls, bars, and bolts, rolling rivers, running streams, rising hills, sinking valleys and spreading prairies that separate us and the cruel injustice that first cast you into prison and still holds you there, with many other considerations, places my feelings far beyond description. No one but God knows the reflections of my mind and the feelings of my heart when I left our house and home and almost all of everything that we possessed, excepting our little children, and

took my journey out of the State of Missouri, leaving you shut up in that lonesome prison. But the reflection is more than human nature ought to bear. And if God does not record our sufferings and avenge our wrongs on them that are guilty, I shall be sadly mistaken."

- Dr. Lisa Tait:           18:48           Then, she concludes... I mean that's such a powerful expression of what she's been through. She says her feelings are beyond description. She can't even give words to what's she feeling. But then she concludes and says, "I shall live and am yet willing to suffer more if it is the will of kind heaven that I should for your sake."
- Dr. Lisa Tait:           19:09           That actually is just really poignant to me because we know that she has yet to suffer a lot more, even at the moment that that letter is written. "So, I will preserve thy life," the Lord tells her. That must have been a promise that she clung to.
- Dr. Lisa Tait:           19:27           He goes on to call her, "An elect lady." Now, here's another example of biblical language. This comes from the New Testament. This will become important in Nauvoo, which we'll talk about here in just a minute. Says, "Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen, for they are withheld from thee and from the world, which is wisdom in me in a time to come."
- Dr. Lisa Tait:           19:53           When we think about, she's there by Joseph's side, as so many of these things are happening. Yet, if we think about what has she not seen, she hasn't seen the angels. She hasn't seen the plates in the way that the witnesses and some of the other people did. She definitely saw them in the sense that she talks about how they were lying on the table, covered with a cloth, in the same room where she was working. She rustled the edges of them and moved them from place to place as she needed to in order to do her work. But she has not violated what she understands to be this commandment that they're not to be shown to anyone, and she affirms that to her son in this interview at the end of her life that no, she never saw them. So, there are many things that she hasn't seen at this point. The Lord is telling her, "I know that that may be difficult for you."
- Dr. Lisa Tait:           20:55           "The office of thy calling shall be for a comfort unto my servant, Joseph, with consoling words in the spirit of meekness." Then, it talks about her being a scribe for him when Oliver Cowdery needs to go and do other business. We know, of course, she had already served as a scribe during the translation of the Book of Mormon. There were times when she wrote for Joseph and we do have her handwriting on some of the pages of the Bible

translation, so we know that she did fulfill this calling of being a scribe for Joseph Smith.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: [21:34](#) Then, it goes on to say, "Thou shalt be ordained under his hand to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit. For he shall lay his hands upon thee, and thou shalt receive the Holy Ghost, and thy time shall be given to writing and to learning much." Okay, well, there's so much we could say here as well. She had not been confirmed yet so this seems to point to that happening. If we look at Section 27, the revelation that comes just a short time later, that comes in conjunction with the time when Emma was confirmed. So, we know that that did happen, but this idea that she's going to be an elect lady, that she'll be ordained to expound scriptures and exhort the church, seems to say that she's going to have a role to play as a leader, a leader in the church.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [22:33](#) Of course, this comes to be understood as being fulfilled in 1842 when she is called and set apart or ordained, as they use the term then, as president of this new Relief Society for the women that's formed in Nauvoo. This idea of expounding scriptures and exhorting the church. This word, exhort, had a particular meaning in the Methodist Church that she came from. Exhorters were lay preachers who had a calling to teach the other members of the church. There's no evidence that this is fulfilled, that she takes this role at the time, at least in a public way. This seems to be, and Joseph gets up on March 17th, 1842 at the organization of the Relief Society and says that, "This is a fulfillment of this revelation to Sister Emma."
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [23:30](#) He also says that she was ordained at the time, meaning in 1830, that she had previously been ordained as this revelation instructs. Now, whether that was something separate from her confirmation and receiving of the Holy Ghost as a member of the church, whether there was anything else particular done, we don't know, at that time. We just know that Joseph says that she had been ordained in 1830.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [23:59](#) Let me just read you a few things that he says here. So, this is in March of 1842, Joseph stands up in front of the women and he reads this revelation, this Section 25 and stated that she had been ordained to expound the scriptures to all and, "to teach the female part of the community in that not she alone, but others may attain to the same blessings." He goes on to read from the Second Epistle of John, first verse, which is where we get the term, elect lady, and he reads that to show that respect

was then had to the same thing and why she was called an elect lady is because she was elected to preside.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: [24:45](#) According to the customs and the procedures of the day at this organization meeting for the Relief Society, Elizabeth Ann Whitney had nominated Emma to be the president of the society and the sisters had voted on that, and in that sense, elected her to be the president of the Relief Society.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [25:06](#) So, again, gosh, there's so much more we could say about her leadership of the Relief Society. If you're interested, you can go online to the Church Historian's Press or actually it's in your Gospel Library app now, the book, The First 50 Years of Relief Society contains all of the minutes of the Nauvoo Relief Society. You can read those minutes and you can see Emma leading, you can see what she says, and the really vigorous leadership that she takes of the Relief Society in Nauvoo.
- Hank Smith: [25:43](#) So, you would just go to your Gospel Library app, you would hit Restoration and Church History, then there's another tab called The Women's History and under that, there is that book right there, The First 50 Years of Relief Society. That's going to be my scripture study.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [26:02](#) That's right.
- Hank Smith: [26:04](#) I'm going to go through and look at that.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [26:06](#) It's a really impressive volume. It's a very substantial volume. It's very much like a Joseph Smith Papers Volume. But the section introductions, the introductions to the documents are very readable and very, very helpful. That book is so amazing for so many reasons that go beyond Emma. It's great for people to know that that's there.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [26:33](#) While you're there in that Women's History section, you should also look at the book called At The Pulpit, which is a collection of discourses given by Latter-day Saint women over the span of the history of the church. We do have some of Emma's words in there, we have Lucy Mack Smith and comes all the way up to the last decade. So, that's also a really important resource that people should take a look at and use in your talks and your lessons.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [27:02](#) But Emma says that this opening meeting of the Relief Society says, "We are going to do something extraordinary. We expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls."

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 27:11 Well, let's just make note of the end of verse eight, "Thy time shall be given to writing and to learning much." That's not necessarily a commission that a woman in this period would expect to receive at that time and it speaks to her abilities and to the role that she can play in the church.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 27:33 Now, we get to verses nine and 10, which are really the connection to Section 24. We talked about what Joseph and Emma had been through in terms of their poverty and reliance on other members of the church to support them. You can see that this must be weighing heavily on Emma's mind because the Lord tells her, "Thou needest not fear, for thy husband shall support thee in the church; for unto them is his calling, that all things might be revealed unto them, whatsoever I will, according to their faith. And verily I say unto thee, that thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better."
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 28:20 I mean, again, Emma came from very prosperous circumstances and she definitely must have felt the difference in her life that it had made to marry this poor man who's a religious leader and held in suspicion and disesteem by a lot of people. By this point, she has lost her first child, she is or shortly will become pregnant with twins that she will also lose early the next year, she's beginning to have a sense of hardship that her life may entail. So, the Lord speaks to her fears. "Don't be afraid, thy husband shall support thee in the church." When you read that together with Section 24, with the other revelation, and then throughout the revelations, we have sprinklings of this idea of the church supporting Joseph and his family.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 29:30 There's no question here that the Lord is not promising her wealth. He's not promising her ease and comfort. In fact, He says, "Lay aside the things of this world and seek for the things of a better." That's maybe one of the places where we all can do some soul-searching about what are the things of this world, how do you lay them aside, how do we seek for something better? Can we really do that when the chips are down? Because it's hard. It's hard when you don't know if your children are going to eat. It's hard when you don't know where the next pair of shoes is going to come from. I think Emma experienced that and I know many of us have experienced that. Many of our members experience that.
- Hank Smith: 30:26 Yeah, wow. That verse. That is something I've always... it means to me now than it ever has with your explanation. I've used that verse to question myself many times. Am I just okay with distractions sometimes? A new show on Netflix, great. The

things of this world and the Lord's kind of saying, "Hey, could we put that aside for a little bit?" All these distractions.

- Hank Smith: [30:54](#) I teach the New Testament at BYU, Lisa, and one thing I teach every semester is the parable of the sower and the one soil that probably scares me the most is the soil that has so many weeds, so many other things in it, the plant just cannot grow. Because all these weeds are taking all the resources, all the sunlight, all the water, taking all the nutrients out of the soil and the plant doesn't get any. I've wondered how many times this has been me. Probably neither of you. But it definitely has been me where I've got so much entertainment going on in my life that the things of a better world aren't getting my time. If the Lord would probably say that to me as well, "Why don't we lay aside the things of this world and come after what I have for you?" Oh.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [31:50](#) He does say that, many different times in many different ways, throughout the scriptures.
- John Bytheway: [31:56](#) I had underlined the footnote to Ether 12:4 right there because here's Moroni who is all alone. I like to think of Moroni as the ultimate single adult because his greatest work was done while he was alone. But he finds this Book of Ether and here's a second one as for how nations fall when they reject Christ, puts in the record of the Jaredites. But in Ether 12:4 which is footnoted there, he says, "Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world." And he couldn't improve his world. It was all over for him, for Moroni, but he always had hope for a better world. So, I love the phrase here. This, "There's a better world coming and focus on that one."
- Hank Smith: [32:49](#) In the parable of the sower, the Lord says that the weeds are the deceitful of riches.
- John Bytheway: [32:54](#) Of riches.
- Hank Smith: [32:55](#) The deceitful of riches and the cares of this world. You're right, Lisa, this is throughout the scriptures. Lehi's dream, do you want the building or do you want the tree? You've got to make a choice. Do you want the things of this world or do you want something? The Lord even... He flat out says it, "Do you want something better? What I'm offering you is better than what the world offers you." So, it's got to be frustrating for Him to think, "Why? Why? What is so attractive about the things of this world that you would rather have that than what I'm offering you over here?"

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 33:34 I think He understands it actually. I think that's why He says this. I think He knows exactly what human nature is, exactly what the human condition is. To what John said, unlike Moroni, we can make our lives better, most of us. We live in a world, especially those of us who are blessed with the prosperity of middle-class American life these days, there's no limit to what we can seek for and obtain, riches-wise, in this life. There's some limit, but we like to think there's not. So, we really can spend our lives seeking after the things of this world. As long as we pay our tithing, as long as we go to church, that's enough, right?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 34:33 This is one of the difficulties, and if we were talking about the law of consecration here, which you'll get to in later sections, I think the core question that it comes down to is how much is enough? How much is enough? We have to ask that question of ourselves. That's what it comes down to is we have to ask, how much is enough? When I have sufficient for my needs, then my imperative is to give and to spend my life seeking for the things of a better world.
- Hank Smith: 35:15 Yeah, that's so instructive. In the Book of Revelation, there's this moment where the Savior calls to the people in the great and spacious building and He says, "Come out of her, my people. That you receive not of her sins and of her plagues. Come out of her." I just liked what you said. Throughout the scriptures, the Lord is saying, "Leave that, come here. Leave that, come to me. I offer you something better."
- Hank Smith: 35:44 I want to move to this selection of hymns. What can you tell us about this? This is a new thing. We have a church. We're going to need a hymn book.
- Hank Smith: 35:57 Let me read the verse. It's verse 11. "It shall be given thee, also, to make a selection of sacred hymns, as it shall be given thee, which is pleasing unto me, to be had in my church." And then He goes on to talk about, "My soul delights in the songs of the heart, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and I'll answer it with a blessing upon their head." I think the Lord tells... He likes music. "Wherefore, lift up thy heart and rejoice, and cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made." What can you tell us about Emma and the hymnbook?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 36:29 Yeah. One thing that I can tell you is that singing was a big part of the Methodist tradition that she came from. We still have in our hymnbook many hymns that came out of that Methodist hymn tradition. I Know That My Redeemer Lives is one of them, for example.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: 36:46 This is 1830. It appears that the plan was to publish the hymnal along with the Book of Commandments and the early revelations that William W. Phelps was working on in Jackson County in the summer of 1833 when the mob comes in and breaks up the press. So, the Book of Commandments is never finished, the hymnal is not published at that time.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 37:15 Emma's role, initial role, in selecting hymns seems to have been just that. Deciding which hymns would be included. I don't know how much we know, this isn't something I'm a total expert on, but the development of this first hymnal becomes kind of a collaborative thing between Emma and between W. W. Phelps, as he's known. He's contributing many hymn texts that he's writing which are either hymns that he's taking from the Protestant tradition and adapting with Latter Day Saint content and lyrics, or he's writing original hymns. So, she definitely plays an important role and this is recognized as a responsibility that's given to her by revelation, to select the hymns.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 38:13 The first hymnal is finally published in... the date on it is 1835. It looks like the book itself didn't actually come out until 1836, but it's around the same time that the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants is published. It's a little tiny book. If you ever come into the Church History Library, we have had one of the first hymnals in our display cases there in the Church History Library, so you can see for yourself that it's just a little tiny book that you could put in your pocket. It didn't have the music, just the lyrics to the hymns.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: 39:01 Over time, there's felt like a need to have other editions of hymnals come out. It always comes back to what's Emma role in all of this? In about, I think it was about 1840, the brethren who are in England are wanting to publish a hymnal for the use of the Saints in England. I think it's Brigham Young that takes the lead in that. There's some back and forth about it, but there's an edition of hymns that bears more of the apostles' influence on it. There's been some interesting study done to look at what were the types of hymns that Emma chose and emphasized as opposed to maybe what some of the male leaders did? Emma's affinity was for hymns that expressed a personal relationship with Christ, that spoke of personal religious experience of the grace and power that came from these personal religious experiences. Whereas the Apostles' Hymnal, as it's called, tends to emphasize priesthood and restoration and big doctrinal themes.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 40:20 In the long run, that becomes more of the basis for our hymnbook than what Emma's early hymnal was. But we do still have, and if you look at the bottom of the page, if you still use a paper hymnbook or if you're using the electronic version with the images, it does note which hymns were included in that first hymnal. So, we know that Emma did play a major role. In fact, Lucy Smith describes Emma's work at this time as her whole heart being in it, that she was very much interested in this calling that she'd been given. That was a significant thing for a woman to be given that kind of a responsibility in the early church.

Hank Smith: 41:02 Wow. Music is such an integral part of my own spirituality that, to me, I'm so glad that from the very beginning, the Lord is saying, "Yeah, music needs to be a part of this." Because I know for many of the students I've taught, it's the language of the spirit to them is music.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 41:24 Absolutely. The way it's expressed here, the language is so beautiful, "My soul delighteth in the song of the heart." The Lord says, "My soul." The Lord's soul delighteth.

Hank Smith: 41:32 My soul, yeah.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 41:33 "In the song of the heart, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me." I think we've all had that experience of singing in a prayerful way, in a way that becomes a communion and a plea to the Lord. So, it's expressed really beautifully there.

Hank Smith: 41:49 Yeah, I think in the Gospel of Mark, it says, "Just before the Savior goes to the Garden of Gethsemane, He and His disciples, the Apostles and others, they sang. They sang just before that." I've always thought of that as I sing the Sacrament Hymn. I'm thinking, "This is what the Savior did before He went to Gethsemane."

Hank Smith: 42:09 I think most of us would just say, you can feel it. You can feel the Holy Ghost, the Lord, love music. There's a language there that sometimes can convey things that just words cannot, in music.

Hank Smith: 42:26 So, let's finish out this section, Lisa. Where the Lord talks about, "Lift up your heart and rejoice. You're going to receive a crown of righteousness."

Dr. Lisa Tait: 42:37 Something I noticed in verse 13 that's really interesting, where it says, "Cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made." As

far as I could tell, this is the first time in the revelations that that word covenants is used in this sense. That covenants that you have made, a personal covenant with God. It talks about covenant of Israel and stuff earlier, but this is, as far as I could tell, the first time that He's talking about your covenants in a personal way.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 43:09

Of course, that takes us back to Mosiah 18, and Emma's just recently been baptized. You're willing to enter into a covenant with Him. That seems to be very clearly a reference to her baptism and the covenant there. Perhaps again, we don't know how well she knew the Book of Mormon at this time, but certainly, that was a passage in the Book of Mormon that had stuck out to Joseph and Oliver as they're figuring out what this new church is going to look like.

Hank Smith: 43:54

You described her life to us as earlier, she does bear other people's burdens for the rest of her life. Her husband's and others.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 44:04

Yes, she does.

John Bytheway: 44:05

One of the questions I was going to ask because I want to know if this story is really true and accurate, because to me, it's kind of a window into Joseph and Emma's marriage maybe, is when he is translating and says, "Emma, does Jerusalem have a wall around it?" Can you shed some light on that fun story?

Dr. Lisa Tait: 44:28

Yeah, that's a story she tells. She recalls that when he was... I guess it's when she was serving as a scribe. He stops and he just looks horrified. He's been, I guess, had his face in the hat looking at the stone and he looks horrified and asks Emma, "Do Jerusalem have walls?" Of course, Emma being well-educated in the Bible, says, "Yes, of course it did." And he's very relieved. "Oh, good. I thought I'd been deceived there for a minute."

Dr. Lisa Tait: 45:03

So, she used that as an example to show how unlearned Joseph Smith was at the time he translated the Book of Mormon. She testified strongly that he couldn't even write a well-worded letter at the time that he is translating the Book of Mormon and says, "Though I was there and witnessed all of the events, it is a marvelous work and a wonder to me, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon." So, she bears a really strong testimony of the miracle that that was. So, yeah, that story is part of her illustration of how Joseph Smith was not capable of writing this book of his own initiative.

John Bytheway: 45:50 I kind of just love the window into the marriage of Emma's more educated than Joseph is and he can rely on her. I love that he could immediately stop, "Emma, does Jerusalem have a wall around it?" And that she would-

Dr. Lisa Tait: 46:05 It's one of the reasons Joseph has so much respect for her and so much reliance on her is that she fills in some gaps that he has, especially at first.

John Bytheway: 46:15 Yeah, I love that aspect of their marriage. My wife just creamed me in the ACT test, so I have to rely on her sometimes like this.

Hank Smith: 46:27 Lisa, as you were talking about Emma's final testimony to her son, I have this thought and you both can correct me, but if a critic of Joseph Smith and the church is willing to say that, "The Book of Mormon is a fraud." Then, what does that say? What are you saying about the character of Emma Smith? That she was willing, on her deathbed, to lie to her own children? Are you willing to go there? If you're willing to say, "Hey, I don't believe in the Book of Mormon. I think it's a fraud," then you also are saying that Emma Smith has no character whatsoever. That on her deathbed, she's willing to lie to her own children. I would never be willing to go there. I would never be willing to impune her like that or anyone else involved, but her especially.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 47:16 I have had students ask me in the past because they're aware of Emma's later life and her disaffiliation with the church that comes to Utah. That final testimony that she gives is given to her son, Joseph Smith III, who is the leader of RLDS Church at the time, so we have to understand that to some extent, her lot is in with the RLDS Church at that point. So, when she's testifying about the church, she's seeing that in a different way than what we would see it if we read that testimony out of context.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 47:55 But I don't think that that's a deal breaker. I think as members of the church today, we can still rely on that testimony of Emma's because she's speaking primarily of the events of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. So, whatever her later relationship with the church is is not... that's not up for grabs at the time in the late 1820s.

Hank Smith: 48:24 [crosstalk 00:48:24]. I don't know if you had a chance to listen to our interview with Casey, but he says the same thing. He says her, David Whitmer, there's no reason to say they're... they're telling us how miraculous it was. Why would we refuse to hear them on this?

Dr. Lisa Tait: 48:38 Yeah, in some ways, the fact that they didn't stay with what we think of as the mainstream church adds credence to that because, especially in the case of a David Whitmer whose disaffection from Joseph Smith is so keen, he had every reason in the world to repudiate that and yet he didn't. Likewise, with Emma, she just doesn't qualify her testimony.

Hank Smith: 49:03 Dr. Lisa Olsen Tait, that is your official title. You are a historian and a scholar. You know as much about this history as anyone else. Certainly, you know as much about this history as a critic of the church. Yet, here you are, faithful, believing. Yet, here you know the details of where Joseph and Emma are, according to the month and year.

Hank Smith: 49:39 We want to talk to Lisa. What has the restoration done for Lisa as a mother, as a wife and also as a historian and a scholar?

Dr. Lisa Tait: 49:49 When people ask me why I do history, what is it that drew me to doing history? My answer is people. I'm interested in people. I'm interested in the human condition and the human experience over time, how we're the same, how things change, how people have experienced life, and how much we share with the people who have come before us in this world.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 50:18 For me, my bedrock perspective on history then is that it's about people. By definition, that means people are human. They have weakness. They're frail. They're imperfect. What we call history, they called life. They were embedded and enmeshed in the same kind of uncertainties and messiness and difficulties that we deal with all the time.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 50:49 To me, that perspective makes the hand of the Lord more evident when it is there because we see the experiences, the events, the things that happen that are beyond human capability, that are beyond just what human beings can do and experience on a day-to-day basis.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 51:17 In my own life, I have had those experiences too. They usually come in very quiet ways. They're usually very much bound up in the circumstances and the complexities of my life as it unfolds from minute to minute. Recognizing that about Joseph Smith, about Emma, about the early Saints, I think is important and I think is helpful in recognizing how God really works in the world. It's through the weak and the simple, as He says. It's through small and simple things. It's through the still small voice. Then, there are the moments when it's a little more than

that. We recognize those because they do lift us out of the everyday circumstances of our lives and we can see that that's how it's been for people in the past as well.

- Dr. Lisa Tait: [52:24](#) That having been said, it's utterly impossible for us to ever go back and completely reconstruct the past. I can't go back and reconstruct yesterday, minute by minute. Because we don't have... what would you base that on? We can only reconstruct history based on the sources that we have. That is subject to so many variables, of what got written down and what got saved and was it accessible and do we have it now and then can we make sense out of it, given that our world is so different than their world?
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [53:03](#) So, I just find that my testimony is based on the witness of the spirit. My testimony is based on seeking and immersing myself in the word and having experiences with the Lord that are very powerful and very real, just like these revelations that we've been talking about today were for the people who received them.
- Dr. Lisa Tait: [53:33](#) My confidence in these people and their experiences is strong based on the records that we have and the experiences that they've recorded for us. I think we can learn a great deal from those and we can be inspired by them. But no matter how deeply we study, we can't prove anything one way or another through history. You also can't disprove anything through history. The faith and testimony, that comes through the Holy Spirit and only through the Holy Spirit. But by reading about the experiences of other people, we can share in their experiences and we can have our own faith strengthened and we can have our experiences become more meaningful as we see how we're sharing in that human experience over time.
- Hank Smith: [54:34](#) Wow. I love that. The idea that here are ordinary people having extraordinary experiences. For me, this podcast, I feel like a very ordinary person having an extraordinary experience this year. John, don't you feel the same way?
- John Bytheway: [54:52](#) Yeah. My Doctrine and Covenants will never be the same. Every week, I just look forward to taking more notes, and my nodding muscles are getting sore, like "Oh." Thank you so much.
- Hank Smith: [55:09](#) I ran out of room on my Section 25 margins as I was writing.
- John Bytheway: [55:14](#) Oh man, yeah.

Hank Smith: 55:15 So, I just learned some much. Dr. Tait, Lisa Olsen Tait, thank you so much for being here and giving us your time and giving our listeners so much information and so much knowledge in making these sections now so rich. Thank you so much.

Dr. Lisa Tait: 55:33 Thank you. It's been fun.

Hank Smith: 55:35 We want to thank all of our listeners, of course, for sticking with us. We want to thank our producer, Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our production crew, David Perry and Lisa Spice. As I said now, we are on social media so we want to thank our social media expert, Jamie Nielsen. Thank you so much to our entire team and we'll see you on the next episode of Follow Him.