



*“Thou Art the Christ”*

## **Show Notes & Transcripts**

### **Podcast General Description:**

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

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

### **Podcast Episode Descriptions:**

#### **Part 1:**

Who do you say Jesus is? Dr. Kerry Muhlestein explores how God's covenant path creates a kingdom of priests and priestesses, how humility helps avoid hypocrisy, and how formal covenants change our natures.

#### **Part 2:**

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein continues to explore how Jesus asks us to testify of Him and how He accelerates His disciples' preparation for His death and resurrection.

### **Timecodes:**

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Kerry Muhlestein
- 00:56 Introduction of Dr. Kerry Muhlestein
- 02:14 Background about Pharisees, Saducees, and how they vary by region
- 09:17 Ritual cleanliness and Jewish law and customs regarding parents
- 16:15 Rationalization and loopholes
- 17:46 What defiles a person
- 21:53 Finding fault
- 23:28 Jesus casts out an unclean spirit north of the Sea of Galilee
- 28:39 Jesus teaching Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles
- 32:19 Jesus returns to Capernaum and Decapolis and performs miracles
- 35:40 Jesus heals with touch, spit, clay, etc. and the symbolism connected
- 37:30 Some Pharisees and Saducees asked Jesus for a sign
- 41:43 When asking for a sign is a mistake
- 42:28 Bread, yeast, and metaphors of corruption
- 47:47 The challenge of the world’s influence
- 51:02 Jesus heals a blind man in stages
- 56:20 End of Part 1–Dr. Kerry Muhlestein

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Kerry Muhlestein
- 00:08 The Passion Narrative begins
- 00:51 Caesarea Philippi
- 05:43 Stages of recognizing Jesus
- 09:37 “Blessed are thou”
- 13:14 Dr Muhlestein share a story about a friend who is colorblind
- 16:47 Learning through revelation
- 22:02 Caves near Caesarea Philippi
- 26:44 Jesus gives keys
- 30:44 Peter’s love of Jesus
- 34:57 Many are called, but few show up
- 39:00 *A Man for All Seasons*
- 42:15 Be not ashamed
- 43:52 The Mount of Transfiguration
- 50:29 Seeing things as they really are
- 53:07 The Kirtland Temple
- 58:01 Symmetry between the Mount of Transfiguration and the Kirtland Temple
- 1:02:23 The Godhead bears witness of one another
- 1:06:24 Jesus heals and helps our unbelief
- 1:16:20 Elder Holland addresses faith and doubt
- 1:17:36 Dr. Muhlestein shares his thoughts about God’s love

- 1:21:10 End of Part II—Dr. Kerry Muhlestein

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## Biographical Information:



Kerry received his B.S. from BYU in Psychology with a Hebrew minor. As an undergraduate he spent time at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies in the intensive Hebrew program. He received an M.A. in Ancient Near Eastern Studies from BYU and his Ph.D. from UCLA in Egyptology, where in his final year he was named the UCLA Affiliates Graduate Student of the Year. He taught courses in Hebrew and Religion part time at BYU and the UVSC extension center, as well as in history at Cal Poly Pomona and UCLA. He also taught early morning seminary and at the Westwood (UCLA) Institute of Religion. His first full time appointment was a joint position in Religion and History at BYU-Hawaii. He is the director of the BYU Egypt Excavation Project. He was selected by the Princeton Review in 2012 as one of the best 300 professors in the nation (the top .02% of those considered). He was also a Visiting Fellow at the University of Oxford for the 2016-17 academic year. He has published 9 books, over 60 peer reviewed articles, and has done over 75 academic presentations. He and his wife, Julianne, are the parents of six children and one grandchild, and together they have lived in Jerusalem while Kerry has taught there on multiple occasions. He has served as the chairman of a national committee for the American Research Center in Egypt and serves on their Research Supporting Member Council. He has also served on a committee for the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities, and currently serves on their Board of Trustees and as a Vice President of the organization, and has served as president. He has been the co-chair for the Egyptian Archaeology Session of the American Schools of Oriental Research. He is also a Senior Fellow of the William F. Albright Institute for Archaeological Research. He serves on the BYU Studies Quarterly Editorial Board. He is involved with the International Association of Egyptologists, and has worked with Educational Testing Services on their AP World History exam.

Courses Taught: Old Testament, Teachings of Isaiah, Pearl of Great Price, Book of Mormon, New Testament, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, Foundations of Ancient Scripture, Egyptian History, Egyptian Historiography, History of Civilization, History of the Near Eastern Empires, Ancient Egypt and Foreign Relations, and Marriage and Family.

Areas of Expertise: Ancient Egypt, Hebrew Bible, Pearl of Great Price, Book of Abraham, Isaiah.

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Hank Smith:	00:01	Welcome to FollowHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you. As together, we follow him. Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. It's a beautiful day here in the studio. I am here with my rock of a co-host, John Bytheway, welcome, John Bytheway. John, you're a rock.
John Bytheway:	00:36	I'm more like cream spinach, but I'll take it.
Hank Smith:	00:40	I bring that up because Peter is going to be called The Rock today, our Peter. So John, we are going to be in the Gospel of Matthew, today in the Gospel of Mark today, who is joining us to help us understand all this.
John Bytheway:	00:56	Well, I've been looking forward to this day because we've had Dr. Kerry Muhlestein with us before in the Old Testament, and I'm so glad that he's back today. So let me reacquaint everyone with Kerry. He earned two degrees at BYU in psychology and Hebrew and Ancient near Eastern Studies. He received his PhD from UCLA in Egyptology with a second emphasis in Hebrew language and literature. He spent significant time in Jerusalem, including as a student and a teacher at the BYU Jerusalem Center. He directs an excavation in Egypt. He's a historical and biblical geographer, leads tours and study groups in Egypt, Israel, and Jordan.
	01:35	Is a bestselling author who has published nine books and he hosts his own podcast called The Scriptures Are Real, and he and his wife, Julianne, have six children and one grandson. And I just wanted to mention his books, Finding Promised Blessings

on the Covenant Path, another one called God Will Prevail, and one that a lot of people in our podcast have appreciated called Learning to Love Isaiah. So, we're really glad to have you back, Kerry, thanks for joining us again.

- Hank Smith: 02:03 Yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 02:04 I'm so happy to be back. I always have a good time with you guys and I always learn something. This podcast has enhanced my study of the scriptures tremendously over the last few years.
- Hank Smith: 02:14 Oh, we're grateful you'd say that, Kerry. Thank you. Yeah, we love doing it. Kerry, we've got a bunch to cover today, so let's jump right in. The name of the lesson is Thou Art the Christ, and we're going to be in two gospels, Matthew and Mark. Where do you want to start?
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 02:29 I think we'll bounce back and forth between the two. Really in this particular reading, they cover pretty much the same material, but you'll see, for example, let's start in Mark, you'll get a little bit more of the story with the Pharisees in Mark, you get a little bit more when we get to the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew. And we might just bounce back and forth. And we'll try and highlight some of the unique things about each gospel and some of those literary devices that each gospel writer is prone to use. You get advantages from a harmony account and advantages from a non-harmony account, and we've heard a lot about the advantages of looking at each gospel writer. But I think there's also something about putting them together and trying to come to a more well-rounded picture of the Savior and highlighting the Savior in that way. So, we'll try and do both if it's all right.
- Hank Smith: 03:12 Yeah, that sounds fantastic. I'm going to put a marker in each one.
- John Bytheway: 03:17 Yeah, no kidding.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 03:19 I brought two Bibles with me today so that I can just jump back and forth.
- John Bytheway: 03:22 Have them both open. Yeah, yeah.
- Hank Smith: 03:25 The Come Follow Me manual starts out by saying, isn't it strange that the Pharisees and Sadducees would demand that Jesus show them a sign from heaven. Weren't his many well-known miracles enough? What about his powerful teachings or

the multiple ways he had fulfilled ancient prophecies? Their demand was prompted not by a lack of signs, but by an unwillingness to discern the signs and accept them. That comes out of Matthew chapter 16. Where do you want to go from here, Kerry?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 03:51

Well, let's start in Mark seven and it does start immediately with the Pharisees. And maybe we should just pause and say something about the Pharisees to begin with, because most people in Galilee and Judea at the time, most of the Jews in that area are really following the Pharisaic tradition. They're the ones who are setting the ideas of this is proper practice, orthodox practice for how you live as a Jew. Jesus is very Jewish. He keeps the law of Moses. He really is a good Jewish boy. So people are going to follow the Pharisees, but we talk about the Pharisees as if they're this monolithic, everyone is the same, everyone practices the same, wherever they're from, they're the same. And that's not true at all. They have schools within Pharisaism and different masters, different people follow, they have different interpretations and different ways of doing things and even in the areas.

04:38

So it would seem, and I don't know that we have enough data to really be hard on this, but it would seem that Jesus has a little bit of a different relationship with the Pharisees in the Galilee area than he does with the Pharisees in Jerusalem. And note that this is really specific in both accounts. So we'll read Mark chapter seven verse one, then came together unto him the Pharisees and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. So he's in the Galilee area, but these people are coming from Jerusalem up to meet with him. And typically the Jerusalem group, especially the Sadducees, that's who he is going to have the greatest conflict with at the end of his life.

05:15

That Jerusalem group seems to be a little more hostile. I would argue, and I've had discussions with some of our colleagues, even a little bit of a debate on my own podcast about this, but I would argue that some of the Pharisees, especially those from Jerusalem, there's a little bit of a power struggle. They see Jesus as someone who is gaining in popularity and power and he hasn't gone through the same system that they've gone through. And that seems to just cause a little bit of friction.

Hank Smith: 05:41

Gets under their skin.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 05:42

Yeah, we're reading a lot of things into it and I want to make sure we're careful and it's tempting for Christians in general to just say Pharisees are bad. And I don't think we can accurately

say that. Most of them I think are fantastic and great and have good intent and so on. But of course, in any group, and we can say the same about our own faith, in any group, you have people who are struggling with doing things the wrong way or for the wrong reason and so on, right?

Hank Smith: 06:05

Okay. A little bit of a power struggle from those in Jerusalem. And you could see that. He lives in Galilee, he doesn't live in Jerusalem. Sometimes I would ask my students, "Where does Jesus live?" And they say, "Oh, Jerusalem." No, he never lives in Jerusalem. He lives in Galilee, the northern part of Israel.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 06:21

Yeah, very small percentage of his time is actually in Jerusalem, but it's significant when he goes there. So we hear a lot about it. And it's worth noting that the Galilee area is known for being a hotbed, and this will become a much bigger deal as we get towards the end of the gospels. But it's a hotbed of dissent against Rome and wanting to have a rebellion and looking for a Messiah that will help them to rebel against Rome. The people from Jerusalem are automatically going to be just a little suspicious of any big movements in the Galilee area. They see this as possibly blowing up, and that's exactly when things come to a head at the end of the gospels, it is largely over this issue. Is this man becoming so popular that it's going to bring the wrath of the Romans upon us?

07:00

That's a real part of what's going on. So let's read. They've come as we read in verse one and in verse two, and when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say with unwashed hands, they found fault. Let's pause and talk about that as well. Traditions about how much you need to wash and when you need to wash were in flux and they were changing. And we try and look at records we have from various time periods to see when they've decided what. And the problem is that most of the records we have are from the Mishnah, which is quite a bit later than this. And based on the records that we have, it seems like they're in the middle of a transition period right now, and that it's becoming increasingly common to say that you need to wash your hands anytime you're going to eat or anytime you're going to do a number of other things that might be connected with rituals and so on.

07:47

But they're probably in a transition. So probably not everyone agrees with that, but it's starting to become the norm. So they seem to be questioning him on this practice. And they don't say that you are not washing your hands. So I don't know if we can know whether the Savior is or not, but his disciples aren't washing their hands. And let's take another step back and

notice something that is happening here and you're going to see it a bunch of times in the gospels. And that's a tradition among the Jews and especially among the Pharisees of debating points of law and understanding of scripture. We mark as halakha, this tradition over oral law or how do you interpret and act out the law of Moses? And it's normal to have a debate. Why do you do it this way? Why do you say it this way?

08:29

Well, because of this and this and this and this, and so we say we do it this and this. And usually, you appeal to people who have already had arguments a little bit like we do in court cases today. You say, well, such and such decision and such and such a decision make us think we should interpret it this way. That's the typical way of doing things. Sometimes what we see as huge confrontations, they would've seen as normal discussion. This is what we do. We debate these things, right? And that's just a cultural thing that is even some families are more used to, let's debate this, whereas other families, oh, contention, I don't know. I'm not comfortable with this. So we need to understand that this is typical for Pharisees to ask people questions. And it may not be as confrontational. Sometimes we think it is, although in this case, we will see that by the end, the Pharisees are offended.

09:17

So, it got somewhat beyond the norm, probably because he calls them hypocrites. That might be part of it. But in any case, it starts out as a fairly normal thing. I think they're saying that the norm now is that this is how we've interpreted the law. You should be washing your hands and your disciples aren't doing it. And look in verse four, it even tells us about when they come from the market except they wash, they eat not. So the idea is that you've been to the market and there are gentiles or there are people there who may have things that are not kosher or haven't been kept ritually clean. Just because you may have come into contact with richly unclean things, you should wash before you eat. Now, this is about ritual cleanliness, it's not about hygiene, right? We think you should wash your hands before you eat to get rid of germs.

10:01

They're talking about ritual cleanliness, right? They wash their cups and their vessels and their tables and all of these things. And then it gets back in verse five. So Mark has that nice little explanation of the current Jewish, or at least largely Jewish and Pharisaical custom. Then the Pharisees and the Scribes asked him, why walk not thy disciples according to the traditions of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? So there, they're going back to say, look, our group is established. This is a tradition. You're not doing it. Why? And this is an interesting

thing because as I said, Jesus is a good Jew, but he's also not afraid to challenge the kind of normal thing that is being established by hierarchy in leaderships. He's not afraid to go against the grain. And that's what he is going to do here. As he quotes Isaiah to them, and this is where they may take offense, and he says unto them, well, hath Esaias or Isaiah prophesied of you...

- 10:52 I mean, I would feel bad if someone said this of me, by the way, of you hypocrites, as it is written. This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. How be it in vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men? To take Isaiah whom they revere and say, when he was saying bad stuff, he was talking about you.
- John Bytheway: 11:13 Man.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 11:14 That's pretty sharp criticism. I know we don't want to paint the Savior as someone who can come out harshly, but I think this is-
- Hank Smith: 11:21 It's pretty harsh.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 11:23 Yeah. And then he gets into a specific of how they do this. He says that laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of man as the washing of pots and cups and many other such things as you do. So he is saying, look, you're forgetting about what God commands us to do and you're focusing on all these little things. So for us, this might be you're focusing on, hey, did you fold that sacrament cloth the right way? That's not the way we arrange the cups in the tray, as opposed to what the ordinance is really about.
- 11:52 So verse nine, and he said it to them full well, you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your own traditions for Moses said... Now, he's going to get this as real law, real commandments. When you would get to Moses said in 10 commandments, this is as fundamental as it gets for them. For Moses said, honor thy father and thy mother and whoso cursed their father and mother, let him die the death. Read that this morning with my son, he didn't like that part, but...
- Hank Smith: 12:15 I'm going to read that to my kids. I'm going to put that in vinyl in the kitchen.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 12:18 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 12:20 So what does die the death mean? That's punishable by death.

- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 12:23      Yeah, they could be stoned for not honoring father and mother. Now of course, it's up to interpretation at what level of dishonoring rises to crime, capital punishment. But the clear thing is you should be honoring your father and mother and taking care of them. But verse 11, he's highlighting their kind of lawyerish way around this. But you say, if a man shall say to his father or mother it is corban, we'll come back to that, that is to say a gift by whatsoever thou might be profited by me. He shall be free and you suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother, making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which you've delivered. And many such like things do you. So let's look at the example and then we'll say they do a lot of other things and then maybe we can ask how in the world we probably do this in some way of... I think every member of the church probably has some way they do this.
- 13:11      So corban comes from the Hebrew word korab, which means to approach or bring near. And in Leviticus, you get this as the description of when you bring an offering to God, you approach God and you bring this offering near. So it's the word that designates an offering. What he's saying is if you say this is an offering to God, then you can't use it to take care of your parents. So hang on, I'll get back to that. But what they're drawing on is something that we get in Numbers, Numbers chapter 30 verses one through two, where Moses says, you cannot go against an oath. If you make an oath, you cannot break that oath. And I think we'd all agree with that.
- Hank Smith: 13:50      Yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 13:51      The problem is that they're making an oath that makes it so they can't keep a commandment. Because what they seem in practice to be doing is to say, okay, I know I'm supposed to take care of my father and mother, and this goes kind of to this idea that as you get older, you can't really take care of yourself. They don't have social security. What they have is children that take care of their parents, but you've accumulated some wealth and you don't want to spend it on taking care of your parents. So you say, actually, when I die, I'm going to give all of this to the temple or something like that. So that's corban. It's now corban. It's a vow that I am going to give as an offering to the temple.
- 14:24      So now I can't use it to take care of you. Whatever's left. I can spend all I want, however I want on me, but when I die, then it's going to be given. And I'm just using this as an example. We don't know exactly how the corban worked and what they would do, but it would be something somewhat like this. I don't have to use it to take care of you. And Jesus is saying, and this is

part of this halakha, there's a debate. When you make an oath, you have to keep it, but what if that oath was an oath you shouldn't have made because it makes it so you can't keep the commandments? And Jesus is coming out on this and he's saying, you can't do that. The commandment that given to Moses is higher than whatever stupid idea you came up with that you made an oath about. So quit making oaths that you shouldn't make is really what he's saying. They've found a technical way-

- Hank Smith: 15:05 Yeah, loopholes.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 15:06 ... around. Yeah, that's exactly right. Around taking care of their parents rather than going with what they really... I mean, think of covenant and what we talked about. They should love God and love each other. They should be taking care of their parents because they love their parents and they want to take care of their parents. But they found a way out of that. And he says, you do a lot of things like that. I guess one of my questions is how might we do that?
- Hank Smith: 15:31 Is this why the Savior says later, you strain at a gnat that swallow a camel? It's this idea of you wash your hands, but you don't keep one of the big 10 commandments.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 15:42 Right. That's exactly right. And again, I don't think he's condemning everyone or even every Pharisee, but it's this notion and this idea that sometimes we find ways around it. And I'll tell you, I mean, I know I'm exceptionally good at rationalizing. If I feel like, okay, well, I know things should happen this way, but I'd like it to happen this way. I can usually find a reason why it's okay for me to do things the way I want to do things. I'm a master rationalizer.
- Hank Smith: 16:09 Yeah. If you know the scriptures well enough, you can find a good enough... You can find a loophole.
- John Bytheway: 16:13 Yeah, that's exactly right.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 16:15 And so I would just encourage everyone in the audience to stop and think, is there a way I'm doing this? Is there a way I'm rationalizing and I'm not keeping the heart of the covenant or the laws, I'm not keeping the core of it? I'm going through some actions, but I'm not really acting out of love for God and each other.

John Bytheway: 16:34 I think the little verse six that he introduces this idea with, they honor me with their lips. Okay, there's these words, there's these commandments that you can say, but where's your heart in all of this? And you see in those next verses, commandments versus traditions, commandments versus tradition. Making the word of God through none effect word of God strong through your tradition. And he's putting those side-by-side, and you guys have these out of order here. Your traditions have become bigger than the commandments of God. Is that a fair way to put it?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 17:04 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 17:05 Yeah, I think the big question is, are you trying to find ways to not keep commandments? Are you looking for justification? And if you need to use the scriptures to make yourself feel justified, then we're into trouble territory.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 17:19 Yeah, I would agree. And let's make sure love of God and each other is at the heart of all that we do.

Hank Smith: 17:24 Oh yeah.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 17:25 We can keep moving on. Verse 14, he's going to make a bigger point, and this probably also is part of what offends them. So we're still on Mark chapter seven, verse 14, and when he called all the people unto him, so he's not making this a small little conversation just between him and the Pharisees, he's going public with this.

Hank Smith: 17:42 Let's talk about this with everyone. Like, oh man.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 17:46 Yeah. Okay, now that I've got the megaphone, let's go through this. He said, hearken unto me every one of you and understand there is nothing from without a man that entering in him can defile him, but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear. And then he goes on to talk about this a little bit more and the disciples will say, okay, we don't understand. And he'll explain it more. We get that a little bit more in the Matthew account. But the principle really is he's saying it's not what you eat, it's not unwashed hands or anything that defiles you. It's what comes out of you. But I think we should take a step further and say, it's not just what comes out of you, right?

18:25 So he talks about lasciviousness sin, covetousness, all these kinds of things, that's what comes out of us. But I think it comes

out of us because of what we are, what we've become. So what goes into us does matter in some degree, if we're going to look at the metaphor, the physical metaphor, you are what you eat, right? So you become what you've eaten, and then what you have become influences what comes out of you, what you do, what you say, and that kind of a thing.

- Hank Smith: 18:52 Yeah. What comes out of your mouth. Yep.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 18:54 Yeah. I think that should be our focus is what are we becoming and how that's manifest by the things we say and do. That's what come out of us is what we say and do. But the question is, what are we becoming? And that focus, again, not on the little things of what you do, but why you're doing it and so on, that affect what you're becoming.
- John Bytheway: 19:15 I think that classic talk that President Dallin H. Oaks gave is called The Challenge To Become. And you're just reminding me of that where-
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 19:22 Yeah, I love that talk.
- John Bytheway: 19:24 Yeah, and it seems in here, there's this focus on what are we doing? They've got the laws, they've got the traditions. But President Oaks was like, it's not just what we know and it's not even what we do, but when we know what to do and we do what we know, we become something different. And that's the outcome of all of this is what kind of person are you becoming? And that's why I see that you honor me with your lips. You've got the right words down, but your heart or the intents, and that was the whole sermon on the mount. It was a higher inner law. What are your motives? What are your reasons? And what are you becoming that's harder to measure? Do you remember Elder Lynn Robbins? He talked about we all have to-do lists, but none of us have to-be lists. Do you remember that talk?
- Hank Smith: 20:06 Yeah. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 20:07 He said, I can take my wife on a date, which is a to-do, but being a good husband is a lifetime effort. That's on my to-be list, which I thought was a really good way to look at it. And that's what you're saying, Kerry, what are we becoming?
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 20:20 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 20:21 So Kerry, is Jesus saying here, look, washing your hands is fine. It's a fine law to keep, but if you're not keeping these larger

laws, out of your heart is coming evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetedness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness and evil, blasphemy, pride and foolishness. If you're not worried about those, washing your hands isn't going to help you much.

- John Bytheway: 20:44 Yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 20:45 I think that's exactly right. So if we were to translate this into our day, we can say, okay, so you don't drink coffee and you don't smoke or vape, but you're mean to your neighbor all the time.
- John Bytheway: 20:56 Yeah, right.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 20:57 That's still a problem, right? You should avoid taking the wrong stuff into your body, but you should also be careful about what you are so that what comes out of you is kind to your neighbor.
- Hank Smith: 21:07 Yeah, okay.
- John Bytheway: 21:09 I am a thief, but I always wash my hands afterwards,
- Hank Smith: 21:12 Right, yeah. Yeah, that's good. That is good. I steal.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 21:12 That's what we love about you, John. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 21:19 I steal, but I never swear while I'm stealing. Man, that's good.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 21:24 I'm proud of you.
- John Bytheway: 21:25 Thanks. I wear a white shirt and tie when I steal, so it's different.
- Hank Smith: 21:30 Okay. Yeah. I think we understand this part finally, John and I. If we can make jokes about it, we get it.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 21:35 Yeah, there you go. There you go. And that's this little confrontation with the Pharisees. And again, it's probably less confrontational than we think it is. It's debating of law, but at some point, they get offended. So, it must have had been at least somewhat confrontational, but the Savior doesn't mince words sometimes.
- Hank Smith: 21:53 I wanted to just share something really quick. In chapter seven verse two, this all started with them finding fault in others. This whole conversation started because they found fault. And I've always loved this Marvin J. Ashton quote, "Nothing is easier

than fault-finding." There's no talent, no self-denial, no brains are required to set up in the grumbling business. It doesn't take a lot of brain power to find fault in other people. And I think Jesus is saying, okay, if you want to find fault, we can find some more. Let's talk about some of the faults I find in you since we're talking about that. So just be careful in fault-finding in other people. It probably not going to lead somewhere. You end up looking like the great guy, right?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 22:37

Yeah, that's good. And maybe we can also look at this from a different point of view. The Savior always finds teaching moments. So they bring this debate about law and he turns it into a teaching moment for the small group of disciples and then a larger group of disciples to talk about a principle he really wanted to teach and talk about. I think the Savior can do things we can't do. I don't know that it would be my place to gather a large group around if I'm going to tell someone what they've done wrong and so on, right? That's not my place, but it is the Savior's place. So still, a teaching opportunity is something I should be looking for.

Hank Smith: 23:12

He does turn this into quite a lesson. Since you brought it up, let's turn it into a lesson. Be careful bringing things up around Jesus. He might just turn your comment into a bigger lesson. Yeah.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 23:28

So after this, the Savior's going to leave. So he is in the Galilee area at that point, but now he's going to leave up into what is currently the Lebanon area, the area of the Phoenicians and Tyre & Sidon. So this is a long walk. I have to say one of the things that when I first took my children to Jerusalem, and as we were driving around all the different places he went in the Galilee area, my oldest son was 13 at the time, and that was his comment to me, "I had no idea how much the Savior walked." He walked so far, so many places, just never tired of going around trying to spread the word. And you have to admire that about him and his disciples. So they're going to go a long ways north up to Tyre and Sidon, he enters into a house, and he wasn't trying to be public, but he was too public.

24:18

Everyone knew about him now, so he couldn't be hid. So we're still in Mark seven and we get to verse 25. For a certain woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him and came and fell at his feet. The woman who was a Greek... Now my guess is she's not actually Greek. This is just Mark's term for meaning gentile or something like that because he tells us specifically, she's a Syro-Phoenician by nation. So, she is from Phoenicia and that Syria Phoenician area, and she besought him

that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, let the children be first filled for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto the dogs. Now that's interesting. That can also be seen as harsh. And it brings up an interesting dilemma, and let's go to the Matthew account of this where you get even a little bit more information.

25:06 We're going to be in Matthew chapter 15, verse 22, and behold, a woman of Canaan. Now, they're not called Canaanites anymore at this time, but a woman of Canaan came out of the same coast and cried unto him saying, have mercy on me, oh Lord, thou son of David. So she is acknowledging both his Jewishness and this royal Jewish line. She's not saying son of God, but she's acknowledging who he is, including the covenant identity with both Abraham Covenant and David Covenant with all of this. And she's not of that line. In the Matthew account, he doesn't even answer her. He answered her not a word. And his disciples came in beside him saying, send her away for she crieth after us. And he answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So first of all, that statement doesn't make sense.

25:53 If the disciples are saying, just toss her out, just get rid of her, because he's telling them why he's not going to deal with her, which would agree with why they should toss her out. So they must be saying, send her away as in give her what she wants so she'll leave is what I assume here, but he says, no, I'm just the house of Israel. And that's an important distinction here. And for some of us, this seems like it can be rather exclusive, or elitist, or something along those lines. Like really, you won't even talk to the Gentile? And we know actually the Savior interacts with the Gentiles a lot. Luke will point that out a ton, but we get it even here in Matthew. He certainly interacts with Gentiles, but he seems to be saying, my mission is to covenant people. And there's a pattern that we can see all over in scriptures, including happening today, that if we understand that pattern, I think we can understand what's going on here.

26:46 The father sends the son, we're too cut off from the father's presence to interact with him directly. So the father sends the son to interact with us. He's the intercessor. The son will primarily interact with covenant people. And I think there's not exclusively, I don't want to say that people who aren't in the covenant, that believe in Christ don't have experiences with Christ. And often, real powerful and meaningful experiences, of course, they do. But in this kind of official capacity, he is going to work with people who have entered into a formal and clear relationship with him that has changed their nature enough that

they can interact with him in a different way. And so, he will have that group that he interacts with, and then he sends them out to everyone else to get them to join that group. So it's our job to go to the world and get them to come to Christ through covenant so that Christ can bring them to the Father.

27:39 So that's the order of things. We bring people to Christ, he brings them to the Father. And I think that's what we're seeing here is that he's saying, no, I'm going to interact with you, my disciples, my covenant disciples, and then I will, and we'll see this when we get to Acts and we see it a little bit in the gospels as well. I will send you-

Hank Smith: 27:58 You to the Gentiles.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 27:59 ... out to everyone else. And initially, he sends them only to the house of Israel. The first time he sends a message, just go to the house of Israel. Then he is going to send them to the Gentiles eventually. And you talked about this, for example, when you had Matt Gray on and you talked about the tabernacle, you have these degrees of holiness or degrees of nearness to God. Anyone could be near to Christ in a way, but as President Nelson has been teaching so powerfully, when you're in a covenant relationship with him, you have greater access to his power. You have a closer relationship with him. So he will interact with you and get you to get others to come to him.

Hank Smith: 28:31 Okay.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 28:32 Does that make sense? And John, you said you get lots of questions about this. Is there some other ways that you look at this or you explain this?

John Bytheway: 28:39 The only thing that comes up sometimes is yeah, but what about the woman at the well, she was a Samaritan. Is she considered part of the house of Israel then and that's why it was okay for him to go home that way and talk to her?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 28:52 Yeah, it's a great question. And I would say first of all, yes, I mean, she's partially Israelite intermarried, but partially Israelite. But second, we also want to be clear, the Savior doesn't exclusively interact with Jews. We're going to see him interact with any number of Gentiles. I would guess that in some way, I mean, I think he knows what's going to happen here. I may be wrong, but I think he knows. I think this is a teaching point. He wants-

John Bytheway: 29:16 So that was a teaching moment, yeah.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 29:17 ... to he teaches exactly what we just talked about. He's going to go to the covenant people and the covenant people are going to go to the world, which is exactly what we're engaged in right now as a church, the gathering of Israel, the greatest cause on earth today.

Hank Smith: 29:32 I like that curiosity. I like also that he probably knows how much faith this woman has, and he's going to teach his disciples a lesson when they're saying, oh, she's a gentile. Just give her what she wants, she'll go away. And he's like, oh, I'm not here for gentiles. But then thinking to himself, watch what this gentile's about to do. She's going to teach you something.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 29:53 She could take offense at this. He just called her a dog because the parable or the analogy he uses to teach this is, I'm sent to the children. The children are the house of Israel and I'm feeding them. Why would I give food for the children to the dogs? So he's calling her a gentile dog basically. But look at her humility and her faith, then came she and worshiped him saying, truth Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

Hank Smith: 30:21 My goodness.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 30:21 So she's not going to be deterred for one thing. And let's highlight, we're going to see in this reading a couple of time parents wanting blessings for their children. And my guess would be that any parent listening right now has felt that way and will feel that way many more times. I have experienced no pain for myself that has been as great as the pain I've experienced when I want my children to be relieved from pain and when I want to bless my children. And we're going to see that again and again. So she is not going to give up and she's humble enough to accept what he said and still demonstrate her faith. I believe that even just a teeny little bit of what you're doing. If you can do just a teeny bit, you can heal my daughter. That's incredible faith. And then that gets us to this incredible verse that's in verse 28. Maybe John, could you read that and talk about that for us?

John Bytheway: 31:07 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, oh woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. So faith precedes the miracle type of a thing.

- Hank Smith: 31:22 Kerry, I liked what you said, that he probably knows what's about to happen. And so he's like, let's insult her and watch her reaction, and she is going to end up teaching the disciples, this is what faith looks like.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 31:37 It's a beautiful lesson. If only we had the faith of that woman and the humility of that woman to say, maybe I'm not worthy of every blessing, but I believe we need this blessing and we believe you can give it to us.
- Hank Smith: 31:52 So I don't care what I'm called. It's fine. I'm a gentile. I know how this works. I just need this blessing.
- John Bytheway: 31:59 And as Kerry said, if you are seeking a blessing for your child and you can't give the blessing, I mean, you're at a point where I'll take crumbs, anything you've got because it's my child I'm talking about here. And that makes you pretty humble at that point. Anything you can do, please do it.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 32:19 Yeah, we'll come back to that idea because it comes up a number of times in this reading. Now, if we continue in the Matthew account, we get kind of a broad sweeping story, and then we'll get an individual story in the Mark account. In the Matthew account, verse 29, after that powerful verse that John read, we get Jesus departed from thence, so from that Phoenician area and came under the Sea of Galilee. So he is going back to where he typically is, right, home bases in Capernaum.
- Hank Smith: 32:45 He's doing a lot of moving today. He's doing a ton of walking.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 32:49 Yeah. Yeah. In fact, I'll tell you, one of the things I do in my classes is at the beginning of class every day, I put up a map and I say, just for the reading for today, here's where we see the Savior go. Here, here, here, here. Just so that they can kind of picture. And it's incredible how much he travels to try and have everyone be blessed. In any case, he comes back to Galilee and he went up into a mountain and sat down there, and a great multitude came unto him having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak and the maim to be whole and the lame to walk and the blind to see, and they glorified the God of Israel.
- 33:27 This is just continuation of this mass wholesale healing and miracle working that he's doing everywhere he goes that serve

as signs of who he is. This is what gets people to recognize that this is... Eventually, they'll go from even a great prophet to more than a prophet, and we'll talk about that as we get to chapter 16. But we get a very specific story in the Mark account.

Hank Smith: 33:53

Okay. So we're going back to Mark.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 33:55

Back to Mark seven, and when he talks about them coming into Galilee through the midst of the coast of Decapolis, so that's an interesting thing that touches on what we were just talking about. Historically as they kind of carved up this area, the Romans carved up the area into administrative districts. We've got Judea as one administrative district, Samaria as one, Galilee as another, but there was this group of 10 cities that were not very Jewish. We'll say Hellenistic. They're not necessarily actual Greeks, but they're Hellenistic from all sorts of areas. And they were worried because there had been some earlier... Under the Maccabees, there had been some forced conversions. They were being forced to convert to Judaism when they didn't really want to be Jewish. The Romans set aside this area that's on both sides of the river Jordan that they call Decapolis, meaning 10 cities.

34:43

There are 10 cities that they form a geographic area, and those are very, very gentile cities. They are not Jewish. There are probably Jews in them, but they're largely Gentile. So the Savior is going through some gentile areas. Maybe he's only preaching to the Jews in there, I don't know. It doesn't tell us, but he certainly is going through some gentile areas. For example, if people are familiar with it, Beit Shean is one of the Decapolis cities that's somewhat close to the Galilee area. Hippos is right next to the Sea of Galilee. It's a Decapolis city. So you've got a couple of those that are likely candidates for where the Savior is going as he does this.

Hank Smith: 35:21

Is Tiberius one of these cities?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 35:24

No, it's solidly in-

Hank Smith: 35:26

It's in Galilee.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 35:27

Yeah, it's in his realm. It's becoming his capital. So it's Herod Antipas's city. But he is going to make it more Hellenistic than most of the cities around there, so that's a good point. Anyway, and they bring unto him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they beseech him to put his hand upon him, and he took aside from the multitude... He took him

aside from the multitude and put his fingers into his ears and he spit and touched his tongue. That's maybe not good hygiene, but there's some great symbolism here, right? We've had a number of times where we've had touch being associated with healing or with miracles.

- 36:05 And then we get this... And you are looking up into heaven's side and said into him, Ephphatha, that is be open. So it comes from the Hebrew word petah, where he's probably speaking Aramaic, but it's a cognate language. So petah means to open, and so he's saying, be opened and straightway his ears were open, and the string of his tongue was loosed and he spoke again. And then interestingly, he, meaning Jesus charged them that they should tell no man, but the more they charge them-
- Hank Smith: 36:29 The more they told everybody, yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 36:32 Which is sometimes how it goes. Anytime you tell someone to keep a secret, that's the best way to make sure everybody knows, but-
- Hank Smith: 36:37 Yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 36:39 The Savior is certainly getting to become well-known as a miracle worker.
- Hank Smith: 36:45 I like what you said there about touch. The guy can't hear him, so he's got to do something else to give him something to know what's happening.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 36:55 That's a good point. I hadn't even thought of that. He can say, be open, and other people will hear that, but he's interacting with him in a way that works for him, and it's a symbolic action, which is important for this culture as well.
- Hank Smith: 37:05 So yeah. Give him something to have faith in. Yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 37:10 Now, I don't know how much you'd like to talk about the feeding of the 4,000. This is after he has fed the 5,000 and we have a very similar story where he has to teach the disciples again and get them to bolster their faith again. But it's similar enough, and you've talked about that with the feeding of the 5,000.
- Hank Smith: 37:26 Yeah, I think we're okay to move on because we've got so much other good stuff here.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 37:30

Yeah, we really, really do. Well, let's go back to the Matthew account. And chapter 16 verse one, the beginning again is really interesting to me. The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came. Now, they're usually... I mean, they work on the council, the Sanhedrin together, but they're often somewhat at odds. So when they're working together, this is significant. And what's more, the Sadducees are largely from Jerusalem. Their power base is the temple, and these are the descendants of Zadokite priests. That's where the word Sadducees comes from, Zadokite. So they're not exclusively from Jerusalem, but that's where their power base is. So again, it suggests that we've got a group of Pharisees and a group of Sadducees from Jerusalem coming up, and they are specifically, it says tempting. It's like to test him or to try them, right? They're trying to find a way to have a problem with him. And typically, the more the Sadducees are involved, the more this is the case.

38:24

And so, they ask him to show a sign, and I to say just personally, I love the sign, he talks to them about, he takes them to task in verse two, he answered and said unto them, when it is evening, you say, it will be fair weather for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today for the sky is red and lowering. So now, I just have to say before I even recognize this in the scriptures, I knew a saying that is basically the same saying, my family loves to water ski. When I was really young, my dad built a boat because we couldn't afford to buy one. He built a boat, we'd go water ski out. Well, he learned to water ski on a canal in Provo, on a canal behind a car. And then he built a boat.

John Bytheway: 39:01

Nice.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 39:01

And we went water-skiing and we just skied all the time and we'd go to Lake Powell and everything. So from the time I was young, my mom and dad taught me this saying, "Pink at night, sailor's delight. Red in the morning, sailor's warning." We'd always want to know because best skiing is in the morning when it's calm and you don't have other people out on the lake or whatever. Every night, if we wanted to go skiing, we'd go and look to see if it was pink. Every morning, if we were going to go, we'd see if it was red. I never ever found a time that was wrong. Now, sometimes it's not either pink or red, so then you don't know. But often, it's pink at night and then you're, okay, we can go skiing tomorrow morning. If it's red in the morning, you're like, ah, not going to be a good day.

39:37

That sign was completely accurate in my experience growing up as a water-skiing fan. And that's exactly what the Savior's telling

him here. He says, look, this little thing, you can read those signs, but you've already had plenty of signs for me that you are refusing to read. So why should I play this game with you? I've already given you what you've asked for. I know you know how to deal with signs. You've shown me you're just not going to believe, so I'm not getting involved in your game. And he uses it then as a teaching moment, verse four, a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. Now, I think we want to be careful with that as well. Sometimes because of that and Joseph Smith says, anytime someone asks for a sign, you can be sure they're an adulterer. We start to think any kind of signs are bad, but the scriptures are actually full of all sorts of signs that aren't bad.

40:25 So I would say it's the show me a sign or I won't believe. If we combine what we've got here with some Book of Mormon stories, I think that's the kind of sign. I'm not going to believe until you show me a sign. That kind of a sign is a problem. But we find examples in the scriptures of people like Gideon and others who say, okay, I'm already doing what you asked me to do. I just want to know, are you still with me? Am I still doing this the right way? Is this the way you want me to do it, or is this the way you want me to do it? They believe and they're acting and they just want some direction, or some interaction, or something like that from God. And I think that's a different kind of sign that God seems to be willing to work with.

John Bytheway: 40:59 It's like the dew on the fleece, that's the Gideon sign, right? He's a believer. I've heard S. Michael Wilcox talk about this, I just need a fleece. I need something to help me to keep going.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 41:10 And Gideon's already there with an army. It's not like he's not already acting. I've certainly had this in my life where I'm just seeking and seeking and seeking for an answer to prayer and nothing's coming. And so I try and follow what Elder Scott and some others have said, keep moving forward, and the Lord will let you know if it's the wrong way. And sometimes I just say, this seems like it's what you want me to do, I'm going to move forward. You need to send something to tell me it's wrong if this isn't what I should do. And sometimes I've had something that was a pretty strong sign. Nope, that's not the right way. And sometimes pretty good sign, okay, this is the right way. Often only after a long time of not knowing what was the right way.

Hank Smith: 41:51 And keep working, keep moving forward.

John Bytheway: 41:53 Our friend and colleague, Dr. Robert Millet, I remember him saying once, what do adultery and sign seeking have in

common? And he said, a sign seeker says, I want the evidence. I don't want to do any of the work or exercise any of the faith. An adulterer says, I want the pleasure of another person, but I don't want any commitment. But that was a, oh, okay, it's kind of something for nothing mentality that both of those kind of imply. That helped me to see why those are so often grouped together by the Savior. I want something for nothing.

- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 42:24      Yeah, no effort, just payoff.
- John Bytheway: 42:27      Yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 42:28      Which goes back to what we were talking about earlier. You don't become what you need to become with that kind of a scenario. Part of the reason that effort is required for all good spiritual things is because we're a gospel of becoming, to use President Oak's phrase. It's about what we become as we do, think, pray, and so on. And that really takes us into the theme of the next part, which is when Jesus is going to again create a teaching moment. We got verse five. We're still in Matthew 16, verse five, and when his disciples come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. So he's going to use this as another opportunity to teach. And he said unto them, take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reason among themselves saying, is it because we've taken no bread? What's he talking about, right?
- Hank Smith: 43:15      They're a little off course, off track there. Yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 43:18      They're like, huh, he's telling us to go in and buy bread, but make sure you don't buy from Pharisees or-
- Hank Smith: 43:22      Pharisees, yeah.
- Hank Smith: 43:24      Don't buy the Pharisees' bread, it's bad bread.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 43:26      They have poisonous yeast or something. And so let's talk just because I like people to be able to picture what's happening and how life works for them and make the scriptures real. They didn't use leaven the way we use yeast. Typically, most of the time when they raise bread, what they do is a little bit like we do sourdough. You have to have a bit of dough that was leftover from the last one that is fermenting. That's what causes it to rise. And then you mix that dough in with your new dough you've just made, and then it takes a long time. It's not fast like what we do now. It takes a long time like some of the reports are that the women would have time to go to the temple and

come back, and now their dough has risen. So it takes a while for that natural fermentation to happen.

44:06 So basically what you do if you are going to make bread and you don't have any starter dough with you, you've got to go get someone else's starter dough. So that's kind of the simply saying, don't go get starter dough from the Pharisees and then let that ferment. And that's why most of the time, not all the time, but almost all the time, leaven becomes a sign of decay, or spiritual decay, or spiritual corruption, because what makes the bread rise really is fermenting. And that's good if you let it go to a point, but it always becomes a problem if you let it go too long. So it becomes a symbol for something that can become corrupting. That's what he is talking about.

44:47 And I think it's a great metaphor for the Pharisees or for some of the things we were talking about earlier, and again, I don't want to say every Pharisee or anything along those lines, but at least that group that was just there questioning the Savior, trying to cause a problem for him. Because he says the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and that's the group that had just been with him. And I think he's saying, look, they're both built on a good base. They both got a good starting point, but if you go too far with what they're doing, this will corrupt you. And that's what, at least that particular group that was just with them, they had become at least corrupt to the degree where they are trying to cause a problem for the Savior.

45:25 So again, we have to ask ourselves, what, from the world around us is good, taken in little measure, but we just keep letting it ferment in our lives and it becomes corrupting? And my guess would be that the answer is just about everything. Whatever you're taking in from the world, if you do too much of it, it's a problem. I think that's probably part of why President Nelson said, and I'm just paraphrasing, but why he said, if you get all of your information from social or other media, you'll be deceived. So you need to make less time for that and more time for Christ. Because if you're getting more from the world than you are from Christ, you're going to go moldy, as it were, spiritually moldy. That's what we don't want.

Hank Smith: 46:08 It's great when they figure it out in verse 12 and understood how he bathed them, not beware of the leaven of the bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Oh, okay. That's what you meant. I love those moments.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 46:22 And I do love that we see that, how patient the Savior is. I wonder how many times he's sitting up there going, why don't

you get this? I've taught this to you so clearly and you're doing your own thing, but I'll just keep working on explaining it to you. And I will be honest that sometimes that explanation has come through listening to this podcast, or general conference, or other sources like that where suddenly I go, oh-

- Hank Smith: 46:45 Oh, I get it.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 46:46 ... I've been thinking of that wrong this whole time. Oh, that's really helpful. So it's nice that the Lord can just keep patiently working with us.
- Hank Smith: 46:55 Yeah, and we have to beware of any doctrine that doesn't come from Christ, it can be a corrupting influence. Any teaching that doesn't come from the Savior, you've got to watch out and be careful around that.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 47:06 And there are certainly good things that come from the world around us, but as you said, you got to be careful. Even a good thing, if we go with it too much becomes a bad thing, if it's anything but coming from God.
- Hank Smith: 47:18 Yeah.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 47:18 That's why we need more general conference and less of some of the other stuff I listen to, so...
- Hank Smith: 47:24 Yeah, I think it's a powerful lesson, just beware of the corrupting influence.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 47:28 Yeah. How much of the world's dough are you mixing in with your new dough is a question for all of us to ask.
- John Bytheway: 47:35 And this sounds to me just like a repeat of what we've already talked about, how much traditions of men have taken over from the commandment of God or from the word of God? And it's just another way of saying it.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 47:47 I think that this probably is the greatest challenge that we face today. And I'd say certainly the generation of young adults and youth, but I think really everyone is how much we're influenced by the world and how that corrupts the way we perceive or receive the things of God. I think if you go and look at President Nelson's talks the entire time he's been president of the church, you'll find that theme in just about every talk. You can see ways he set this up, whether it be him asking how do you hear him, and then after that saying, okay, are you letting God prevail in

your life more than anything else? You have to let God prevail more than the world in your life. And then saying, okay, like I said just a minute ago, make more time for Christ. Let's take you to the next step.

48:37 You're letting God prevail, you need to do it even more. Listen to the world less. Listen to God and Christ more even to where we get to this last one where he says, if you are accepting the world's values of power, popularity, possessions, or pleasures of the flesh, you will find they cannot satisfy you and give you peace and rest. You will have to go to God and Christ through the covenant if you really want peace and rest. He just keeps teaching us this in a thousand different ways. And actually, President Oaks has given similar themes a lot of times, the influence of the world, beware of the influence of the world. And yet we listen to the world so much we have these little earpods in and we're listening to all sorts of stuff all the time. And I think we don't realize how much we are influenced by the way the world thinks and what the world tells us is important and how we should get things, this incredible individualism of the world and so on.

49:28 The you do you idea. And then when the prophets tell us something, we start to filter it through what the world has told us and we either twist it, or we reject it, or we live with some dissonance and friction in our lives like, well, okay, I believe the prophets, but I don't believe it on this because the world told me this and so on. But we don't quite see it that way. And it inevitably causes us problems where really what we should be doing is filtering everything that the world tells us through what the prophet is telling us. And what the scriptures, what Christ is telling us through ancient and modern prophets, let's put it that way. Too often we don't do that because the lions share of our time is given to listening to the world, not to God.

John Bytheway: 50:08 Excellent.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 50:09 And I see that struggle so much with the youth and the young adults in the church today. I see it with me too. So with everyone, but especially with that group that has grown up with so much access to listening to the world all the time.

John Bytheway: 50:22 So today the Savior would say, maybe don't beware the leaven of the Pharisees. He would say, beware the leaven of the world. Beware of what the world teaches you because it can spread.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 50:35 Yeah, and it does spread. Just think of your mind as the dough and you put that fermented dough from the world in, and it's

just going to infiltrate your entire mind. So that's what we have to be careful of. It influences the way we think more than we realize. And we have to every now and then stop and ask ourselves, how am I thinking about this issue and how much of that is influenced by the world as opposed to the way God would have me think of it?

John Bytheway: 50:59

Excellent. Thanks, Kerry.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 51:02

We're not spending a lot of time on the feeding of the 4,000 or so on, but right after that in the Mark account, you get a really remarkable story that I think is worth thinking about. And my guess is that a lot of our audience will resonate with this. So Hank, do you want to read Mark? We're in Mark chapter eight. Do you want to read verses 22 through 26 for us?

Hank Smith: 51:22

Absolutely, I love this story. And he cometh to Bethsaida and they bring a blind man unto him and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, led him out of the town. And when he had spit upon his eyes and put his hands upon him, he asked if he saw ought? And he looked up and said, "I see men as trees walking." And that he put his hands again upon his eyes and made him look up, and he was restored and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house saying, "Don't tell anybody." Right? Neither go into town, nor tell anybody in the town. I'm sure he did anyway.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 51:56

Yeah. And lots of others probably did as well. Now, that's a really unique and unusual story because typically, I mean, the Savior heals other blind men and he just touches them and they can see fine. This one is interesting that takes a minute, and heals them in stages. I don't know why, we can theorize all sorts of things, but I'll tell you at least one lesson that I've taken from that, that I'd taught a number of times, but it's become more real to me recently. It seems to me that often in life, the Savior doesn't answer our prayers all at once. Everything made fine and whole all at once. It can be a process and that process is still miraculous, but it's harder to see the miracles when it's a process, right? And I've thought and believed that for a long time. We have for a while gone through some trials as a family.

52:46

I have a child who's had some really difficult health challenges that of course they're difficult enough and your spirit and your body and your mind interact that they can become mental health challenges and so on. I cannot tell you how much over the last, it's almost exactly a year now, that some of these got more acute. And it started a really tough year. And I cannot tell you how often I have prayed and pled and begged for miracles.

And really, it's kind of taken over our whole life and we've just pled for miracles. And President Nelson, about a year ago, said, pray for and expect miracles. And I have taken that so seriously, and I keep praying and I say, I know you can do miracles. We're praying for all sorts of healing, please, please, please. And there have been times where I've thought, why isn't this happening?

53:33 But there have also been times where we've been able to look and say, we've actually seen a number of little miracles and we're not where we want this to be yet, but I believe it's going to get there. And I don't know how long it is, and honestly, I wish the road were shorter and I wish it were less painful. And I'm not talking about for myself, I'd like it to be less painful for my child and I'd like it to be quicker for my child. But when I think about it, we have seen miracles. We have seen things that would be like, oh, I can see men walking as trees. I'm not where I want to be yet, but I'm not where it was. It's gotten a little bit better. And that's true, both the physical healing and emotional healing, not just in our family.

54:18 I think that's probably true for a lot of people where sometimes you just have to stop and see the miracles that are there while you're waiting for the full miracle like this man who was at Bethsaida and take joy in the process even though there's still pain, or as President Nelson described in his last talk, we can have this in the midst of our most vexing problems. There's still joy from the little bits of miracles that we see as we were healed and made whole in stages. I would guess that a number of people are feeling that in their lives right now.

John Bytheway: 54:52 I have in my margin right there, I have BRM, which is my code for Bruce R. McConkie, who said, men also are often healed of their spiritual maladies by degrees.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 55:03 Yeah. And it doesn't lessen the miracle, it's still a miracle. And I'm grateful for this story to help us recognize that sometimes the Savior works that way.

John Bytheway: 55:16 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:00:00 Welcome to Part 2 with Dr. Kerry Muhlestein. Matthew 15-17 and Mark 7-9.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:00:08 All right. Now, the next verses get us into one of the more significant stories in the gospels, I think. This is a really profound moment and we've got a couple of those. Two of the most profound things in the gospels happen in today's reading, and of course in the readings we get to when we get to what we call the passion narrative or the Gethsemane and crucifixion narratives. But Hank, do you want to read for us a little bit? Let's just start in Matthew 16 and we can do verses... Let's just start with 13 through 14.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:35 "When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, 'Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?' And they said, 'Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah'."
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:00:51 Let's get our setting for this because it impacts a little bit of what's going on here. We've talked already about a couple of the different kingdoms. So you've got the Romans divided this up after Herod the Great dies, they divide up his kingdom. One of them is ruled by one of his crazy sons. And so then it gets taken away from him and it's ruled by Romans themselves. And that's Judea, right. And at this point, Pilate is in Judea.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:12 Jerusalem. That's where it is.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:01:13 Yeah. Jerusalem is in Judea. It's that southern part that has the Dead Sea in Jerusalem in that area. Then you've got two different parts on either side of the Jordan that are given to his son Herod Antipas, and that's the Herod that you'll see Jesus interacting with the most, and John the Baptist. He's the one that kills John the Baptist and so on. Then you've got that group of Decapolis cities that we just talked about. But Herod had another son, Herod Philip. He names all his sons after himself. He's quite a guy. But anyway, Herod Philip has this really northern part. That's the part that the Savior's going to now,

Herod Philip's area that's on the east side of the Jordan River, north of the Sea of Galilee, that area. All right?

Hank Smith: 00:01:53

Which he named after himself.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:01:55

Yeah, the capital he names after himself. That's exactly right. So this capital, he names after Caesar Tiberius, but Caesar and himself Philip. So Caesarea Philippi is his new capital that he's building named after Tiberius or Caesar and himself, because why not? He's got a little bit of his dad in him, so why not name the city after yourself? It's got a Jewish influence, but it's also a very Hellenized city and Romanized city. So it's got all sorts of temples in it. The primary temple is the temple to Pan. The modern name for this place, it would be Pnias, but in Arabic they don't do Ps really, so it becomes Banias. And that's what it's called today as Banias, named after Pan, but it's Caesarea Philippi.

00:02:37

They're in the coasts it says. So they're not right in the city, they're in the borders. Coast is the KJV word for borders. They're in the border. They're just right near the city, but not in the city. And that's where he chooses... And we'll see at least some reasons I think for this as we go along, but that's where he chooses to have this profound discussion with his disciples there. And he asks, "Who do they say that I am?" Note that he uses a title for himself even in asking the question, the Son of Man. Now, I don't know if you've discussed that title in any of your other episodes.

Hank Smith: 00:03:08

Let's do it again just in case, yeah.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:03:11

This is drawing on imagery from Daniel where Daniel sees a vision where the ancient of days who we know from Joseph Smith is Adam interacts with someone who is called the Son of Man. And the Son of Man is a messianic figure. We know it's going to be Christ, but for Jews who hear the phrase Son of Man, there was a time where this is used with Ezekiel to mean mortal and so on to emphasize your mortality, and that still can happen. But at this point when you hear Son of Man, youth of the Jews at this day are going to think this Daniel prophecy and it's a Messianic figure.

00:03:43

He's already saying something about himself even as he asked the question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" It's interesting that some say John the Baptist because they were seen together. So that's a little weird to me. But anyways, not everyone knows that so they're like, "Oh, he was the coolest, most powerful prophet recently. He's come back as this

guy." Others say Elijah. You can get why they would expect they know Elijah's going to come back at some point and the Savior is doing miracles that are like Elijah. So let's maybe stop and talk about this because it's going to come to play in what Peter is saying and it's going to come to play in a number of future readings, and so a number of your future episodes.

00:04:21 Elijah and Elisha are the greatest miracle working prophets in Israelite history. That's what they're known for. We don't have their sermons or anything like that. They preach through these miracles. And so if you're going to judge a prophet as someone as to whether they're a prophet or not and whether they're a great prophet or not, then the standard is Elijah and Elisha. And Elias is the Greek version of Elijah. So when you read Elias, just think Elijah. So that's the standard. So the Savior is working miracles that are like Elijah and Elias. Again and again, raising people from the dead, which Elijah and Elisha did. Healing people, control over the elements, a control over food. Elijah and Elisha did all of these things. It's inevitable that people are going to start to recognize him as a great prophet because he can match all of those miracles.

00:05:13 In fact, I think, one, he does intentionally when Elijah raises a child from the dead on the foot of Mount Moreh, the Shunammite woman's child that's in the foot of Mount Moreh. Well, if you go around the corner of Mount Moreh is the city of Nain, and that's where the Savior raises a widow's son from the dead. I think it's not coincidental that it's in the same place. I think he does these things as signs so that people will say, "Okay, I can't help but think of Elijah when this happens here." So he's being recognized as a great prophet.

00:05:43 There are stages in recognizing who Christ is. One of them, you can think of him as a man or even a good man. The next one is a prophet or even a great prophet, and that's where most of the Jews are for quite a bit of this story. But then it's a step up from being a great prophet to being the Messiah. That's something more. And then their concept of Messiah does not include necessarily for very few would it have, and maybe hardly any, maybe none, I don't know, but the concept of Son of God.

00:06:17 And so if you're going to recognize who Christ really is, these are the stages you have to go through. Good man, great man, prophet, great prophet, Messiah, Son of God. Those are all different places that you'll find people in the New Testament, the gospel stories, everyone you encounter is probably somewhere... Well, some people think he's like a terrible person, but most of them think he's somewhere on that

spectrum and they have to kind of figure out where they are on that. And he's continually doing things to help them come to that realization. And you're going to see when you get to John 11 and things like that when he does miracles that exceed... John 9 and John 11 he does miracles that exceed Elijah and Elisha. And that's when the Pharisees and Sadducees decide, especially the Sadducees, decide they have to do something because-

Hank Smith: 00:06:59

He's getting really popular, yeah.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:07:02

Yeah. And it's hard to escape the conclusion he's more than a great prophet when he's exceeded... If you exceed Elijah and Elisha, you have gone to the next level. So all of these miracles we've been reading about are taking people to the point where they are equating him with Elijah or Jeremiah or John the Baptist. They're equating him with the greatest of prophets. You don't see Simon and the others, his apostles saying, "Yeah, they're saying you're the Messiah." Now, that people will be getting to that point for sure, but that's not the answer to the saying here. They're equating him with three great prophets, John the Baptist, Elijah and Jeremiah. Three of the greatest prophets. And then he asked them this pointed question that I believe one day, and hopefully in some ways today, but at some point it will be even more significant, we all have to answer this question, "Do ye say that I am?"

Hank Smith: 00:07:50

"I know what other people think. What do you think?"

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:07:53

Yeah, that's something that we have to answer for ourselves and one day I think we're going to have to look at the Savior and answer that question again. And yay for Peter. Everyone has foibles, but I love Peter. And note here they call him Simon Peter. His name is probably Simeon, but this is Greekified, right? Simon and Peter which is from Cephas, which is for Cephara. We'll talk about that, but that rock, right? So they've given him both of those names right here. They're giving them the full description as he gets this rock name.

00:08:22

Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ. We're leaving behind great prophet. You are the Messiah. And what's more than that, you are the son of the living God." Now we did have back in John chapter 1 when Nathaniel called him the Son of God. I don't know. There's a part of me that thinks maybe that's a later edition or something. I don't know like that. It seems like this is when they're really coming to realize that maybe some of them realize that as early as John chapter 1, or maybe that's later edition, I don't know. But this is when we get

Peter declaring on behalf of all the apostles, "You are the son of the living God," and that is incredibly significant.

- Hank Smith: 00:09:04 Yeah, it's not something they were taught because obviously Jesus says, "You didn't get that from a teacher."
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:09:10 That's exactly right.
- Hank Smith: 00:09:10 You got that from Revelation.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:09:12 All right, I guess we can have John read verse 17 and 18.
- John Bytheway: 00:09:18 "And Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father, which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it'."
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:09:37 So many profound things in here. Let's tear this apart a little bit. So I love, "Blessed art thou." He calls him what would be his most full and proper name in Aramaic, the way that they usually are called. So he is going to give him that name before he gives him another name. Simon Bar means son. It's Ben in Hebrew. Bar in Aramaic. So for example, when you hear bar mitzvah, son of the commandment, that's Aramaic. Son of probably Johann or something like that, Jonah's a Greekified version of it. So his father's name is probably Johann or something along those lines. And as you already said it, you didn't get this through normal channels. You didn't get this through worldly channels. This goes back to this idea of where are you getting your information? From God or the world? The most important information you will not and cannot get from the world. Instead, it was revealed unto thee by my Father, which is in heaven. That is the only way to learn the things that we really need to learn.
- 00:10:33 I don't want to get into this too much in detail. I have a whole small chapter in a small book I wrote on the book of Abraham on this, but this idea that there are different ways of learning, what we call epistemology if we want to try and impress people and sound really smart. But ways of learning. We talk about observation or authority, all these things, but in the end we create processes. One of the processes that we rely on in our day is kind of a combination of logical reasoning and observation and we call it the scientific process. We observe things and then we try and take what we've observed and reason it out and come to a conclusion. That's fantastic for

teaching us a number of things. There are some things it cannot do. It's just not equipped to do it.

00:11:17 The most important questions in life, what we might call the key questions, the primary questions as Elder Corbridge termed it, those primary questions cannot be answered by the scientific method. They can only be answered by the revelatory method. I don't want to say that the scientific method isn't important or isn't valid or valuable. It certainly is. And I'm quite pleased to have a microwave and cars that work and all the things that we get through that method, right? It's valuable. But just like it would be stupid to discount that method, it's equally stupid to discount the revelatory method and the things that it is designed to reveal to us or to answer the questions it's designed to answer that the scientific method is not designed to answer us. And all of the most important questions the scientific method can't answer, but the revelatory method can, and that is questions about the restoration and most importantly this question, who is Jesus? We can study all we want. Nothing in the academic method can prove or disprove that Jesus is the Son of God. It's not equipped to do so. It's like using a shovel to cut down a tree. It's the wrong tool. You need to use an ax if you're going to cut down the tree or a saw. The correct tool is the revelatory method. And that absolutely answers this question that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

00:12:41 And in my mind, we need to help our young adults and our youth really start to understand this because they hear so much from the world again and this academic method that they are prone to trust that and discount the revelatory method. We need to recognize that they're each designed to do two things. And they are both valid. And it is naive really to dismiss the revelatory method. The people who dismiss it are the people who have never experienced it. And again, that's just so silly to allow someone to dismiss something because they just don't know about it.

00:13:14 When I was growing up, a really close friend of mine was colorblind, but he didn't realize that. We didn't realize it for a while. And I can remember this when I was young. I can remember discussions where he kept saying he thought we were trying to trick him when we talked about the color purple. He said, "There's no such thing," right? He just thought it was a joke we were playing on him. There's no such thing. Naive for him to say there's no purple just because he can't see it. I could see purple. This is to be like me saying there's no such thing as infrared just because I can't see it with my eyes. But that's exactly what we do when we say that the revelatory method is

not a reliable method for learning. That's just someone who hasn't experienced it, dismissing it because of their own inexperience in naivete where we need to teach everyone to take that method of learning very seriously and very valid and as the only way to answer the most important questions.

- Hank Smith: 00:14:01 You talked about Elder Corbridge. I had brought this talk up just for this episode. It's called Stand Forever. It's a BYU devotional. We can link it in our show notes. Just go to [followhim.co](http://followhim.co).
- John Bytheway: 00:14:16 I have an extra credit in my classes.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:14:19 Yeah, we've talked about that because people will do things for extra credit that they won't do if it's required.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:23 I know. So if I really want him to read it, I'll make it extra credit.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:27 That's a good idea.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:28 But what's a primary question and what's a secondary question?
- Hank Smith: 00:14:32 He talks about the divine method. He talks about the scientific method, the analytical method, the academic method, and then he talks about the divine method of learning. One thing he says is pay whatever price you must pay, bear whatever burden you must bear, and make whatever sacrifice you must make to get and keep in your life the spirit and the power of the Holy Ghost. Every good thing depends on getting and keeping the power of the Holy Ghost in your life. Everything depends on that. Powerful talk.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:15:03 Amen. Amen. If you know someone who is struggling with understanding a few things, I would say get that. From that talk, look at that section. You can look at that section of my book about it or whatever, but make sure you understand the contrast between different methods of learning and the value of each, and then help other people understand it. It's one of the most valuable things we can do for our youth today. So if you're a youth leader listening to this, teach them to value revelation as a source of learning.
- Hank Smith: 00:15:30 Make the talk extra credit.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:15:33 Yeah, that's exactly right. Get them to recognize the validity of hearing him if we're going to use President Nelson's phraseology, right?

John Bytheway: 00:15:41 What I love about this is first of all, I like to ask my students, did Jesus care about popular opinion? "Who do men say that I the Son of Man am?" We usually come up with a conclusion, "Well, probably not, but maybe he wondered if his apostles had been affected by it." Okay, well then what do you say? So then he goes to that next level, "What do you think? What does everybody think? And then, well, what do you think?" and gets those answers.

00:16:09 But one of the things I wanted to ask you about when he says, "Flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee," he's saying to Peter, "You didn't even get that from me" because Jesus at that point was flesh and blood. No one could take his life from him unless he allowed it. So it was different. But he's like, "Peter, you got that from God. You got that from my Father," which was a step-up. My brother-in-law, Jeff teaches seminary out in Herriman. He says, "Often I'll begin class by just saying, 'All right, what have you heard?'" Kind of the, "What are they saying out there?"

00:16:45 "Well, I heard this Brother Loveridge. Well, I heard this."

00:16:47 "Okay, but what do you think?" And does exactly what Jesus did. "Okay, what have you prayed about? What have you pondered? What have you wrestled with? And what has God told you after that?" I think it's a really nice way for all of us, what are we hearing out there? Okay, but what do you think and what has the Lord revealed to you?

Hank Smith: 00:17:06 And are you willing to break from popular opinion?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:17:11 Yeah, and it ties back into what we were talking about just a minute ago. I mean, I can almost hear President Nelson asking us, "All right, what's the world teaching? And are you going to go with that? Or are you going to go with what God is teaching you?"

Hank Smith: 00:17:23 "What do you think?"

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:17:24 That is a powerful contrast. That's good, John. It's very important.

John Bytheway: 00:17:28 I think one of the problems with that is things are so instant. We can ask Siri and Alexa and Google and get answers like that. The answers from God come on his terms and sometimes they're not as quickly. And so that that's a caution, is that it might take a while and some wrestling. I have my students... Speaking of

wrestling, I have another extra credit. Go to BYU Idaho's website and find Sheri Dew's talk called Worth the Wrestle. It's 27 minutes and 59 seconds. So in under 28 minutes you can watch this talk. And that idea, again, it might not come quickly, but I want you to have your own answer and it'll be worth the wrestle. So what has God told you is kind of like the verse 17, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father. Well, what has Father told you?" Anyway, that was too long, but you get the idea.

- Hank Smith: 00:18:22 Excellent, John.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:18:24 Well, Hank, why don't you read for us verse 18 and 19?
- Hank Smith: 00:18:28 Okay, this is for Matthew 16. " I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter. And upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:18:47 So many great things in there. Let's focus on verse 18 to begin with. I mean, this is when he really gives Peter, and maybe that he's been called this a little bit before, something I don't know. It's hard to know when the phrase is used earlier. Cephas or Peter is used earlier if that's retro rejecting or what. But it seems like this is when he is really giving him what will become the name he's known by. In Greek, you've got Petra and Petros here. So he says, "Thou art Petros," which is a masculine form, "And upon this rock," which is "upon this rock," that's Petra, "will I build my church." And that's kind of a bedrock thing. Sometimes we make a big deal of that, but we should probably be careful because I don't think he is actually speaking Greek to them. He's speaking Aramaic. And the word would be Kepha. It's not a difference. But still the idea is that he is the bedrock or that something about this, and we'll talk about that, but something is the bedrock upon which he will build his church.
- 00:19:40 Of course you get churches who say it is Peter and he's the rock upon which it will be built. And others, and we largely do this, will say, "No, it's the revelation that Peter received." Upon the rock of you having this made known unto you by the Father rather than flesh and blood. It's that kind of revelation that the church would be built on. And I can't say that I had this idea originally. I'm sure lots of people have had it. I first kind of thought it through in a discussion with our friend you've had on before, Eric Huntsman. But I would say it's a combination of the

two. I would say that the church is built upon the rock of apostolic testimony.

00:20:21 And you think about it, all of us, anyone here that has a testimony of Christ, you gained that by listening or reading the teachings of an apostle about Christ. Whether that be in the gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. And Mark and Luke are maybe small A apostles someone sent forth rather than big A apostle, but they're learning from apostles. Whether it be from reading the Book of Mormon or it be hearing in general conference. And again, it can be big As or ordained to the apostolic office or small A apostle, one who's sent by God. But we've learned it. And for many of us, it would've been from our parents. What I know about Christ, I've gained

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:21:00 from apostolic testimony and then the Holy Ghost came and confirmed that testimony to me, expanded upon it, clarified it in my mind, made it powerful, made it part of who I am. And so that revelation combined with testimony of Christ from others is what the church is built upon. And it has to be revelation and it has to include an element of someone who is sent from God to us. Apostolic authority, we absolutely believe in that.

John Bytheway: 00:21:28 Wow. I really like that. I have always kind of thought, "Well, I think he means both," but you're putting them together. It's apostolic testimony. It is revelation, but it's also from an apostle. I really like that.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:21:42 There's another interesting little thing here as we move on. So he says, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," meaning what he's going to build, right? Although it does prevail against it for a time, what we call the apostasy, but it can't prevail permanently because God restores it and so on. I don't know a hundred percent for sure, but I feel fairly confident that there's an interesting little play on the background going on here.

00:22:02 Let's go back to where they are. They're in the borders around Caesarea Philippi. It's right on the foothills of Mount Hermon, which is the biggest mountain in that area by a long ways. And so the kind of upper edge of the city is up on the foothill higher than everything else, so you can see it from anywhere around. And it's all these Roman temples to Pan and others that are built into the hillside, including a big cave that's in that hillside. Now, in lots of places where you have Roman temples where there's a cave, there's always an element of Pluto or Hades. Roman name is Pluto, Greek name is Hades, and it's thought that this is an access to the underworld or hell basically.

John Bytheway: 00:22:39 So it's the gates of hell is the cave.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:22:41 Yeah, it's quite likely that it was understood that the Roman idea of the gates of hell is sitting over Jesus's shoulder within eyesight of the apostles as he says that the gates of hell will not prevail against this. Right? And in a way, he may be saying this worldly influence that we are trying to avoid, but it's right there, that's not going to prevail against the revelation that I'm telling you God will give you. And it goes back to that same contrast we just said. What does the world say and what do you say and how do you know it? You know it from God.

00:23:14 And right now, I'll tell you, there are days where I feel like the world is prevailing. Not in my life, I hope, but just in general. Like I know so many people who have had stalwart testimonies and are wonderful people, and then they're overcome by the ideas of the world, and it just feels like sometimes I just feel like I'm losing ground with all the people that I know and love. I don't know. This is like President Nelson said, there may be days where we want to don our pajamas and curl up in a ball until the Savior comes again, right?

00:23:40 But we know how this story ends. It will not prevail. The world or the gates of hell will not prevail even though Christ and his apostles are a small group with this big, big massive thing of worldly power behind them. This small group, because they have revelation and power from God, will be what prevails. And let's be on the side of that small group. It kind of reminds me of how Nephi describes it, where the world has the dominion all over the world and the saints of God are few in number, but they are armed with the power of God in great glory.

Hank Smith: 00:24:16 Great glory. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:24:18 I'm glad you brought this up. I feel like when you're there, that mountainside is just this big rock and what are you, five miles from Syria, maybe?

Hank Smith: 00:24:28 Yeah, you're right on the border there.

John Bytheway: 00:24:29 And you're like, "Where is all this water coming from? Because there's a lot of water. Is it a spring? I mean, there's all this water coming out."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:24:36 Yeah. It's one of the headwaters of the Jordan as it comes down through the mountain, Mount Hermon, and then just breaks out right there.

John Bytheway: 00:24:43 And my understanding is that one of the etymologies of Jordan is from Dan. It's from the area that was given to the Tribe of Dan. So the Jordan River is from Dan. Is that how you understand it, Kerry?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:24:55 It's a possibility. You also have yared and going down and so on. So yeah, but who knows? That's one of the possibilities.

John Bytheway: 00:25:01 Well, President Nelson wrote this article called Why This Holy Land? And he commented on Caesarea Philippi. He said, "Caesarea Philippi is located at the base of Mount Hermon. It is the headwaters for the Jordan River, that which gives life to Israel. There is a mountain at the base of which is a mighty rock from which water seems to be flowing, literally the liquid lifeline of this country. Here, Jesus trained future leaders of his church. Could it be that the Savior brought his disciples to this spot to teach the lesson that this majestic mountain symbolized the rock of Christ? From whom revelation would flow to bring light and life to them just as that flowing water of the river Jordan nourishes Israel."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:25:43 I think that's powerful stuff. I've been in any number of times, just marvel and I'll have students or other people I take to the holy land that just sit there and say, "Okay, now look, we're standing right here, and right there, that's rock. And right here, that's river." The river's literally coming out of the rock and we go, and I've taken people on hikes. You just go a little hike from there, and there's huge waterfalls, beautiful. And it's all coming right out of this.

00:26:05 I think it's one of the best visual objects for the idea of living water and springing it out of living water and what we really need to live anywhere. It's just a fantastic place to teach that. And so I'm with you that I think it's not a coincidence, both that you have above where that living water springs out, the things of the world, but then you have the living water coming here and most likely Christ and the apostles are somewhere by where that water's flowing, and he has all of these things that he uses as setting the scene for this significant thing, teaching about who he really is, the living water as opposed to the world and what they need to learn and what they need to do.

00:26:44 Christ takes advantage of everything in his teaching moments. Now, we read verse 19, and that's also very significant. This is the promise. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." And we certainly understand that in some ways differently than anyone else. There's some things we share in this idea that Peter will be given the keys to be able to direct

the kingdom. We understand priesthood keys in a different way than everyone else, and we'll get more into that as we get into chapter 17 of Matthew. But this is a powerful metaphor so that throughout time when people are depicting Peter and they want to put a symbol in to make sure you know that it's Peter, what they do is they give him a key. And so you'll see statues and paintings of different apostles, and you can tell which one is Peter because he has a key, although I think he could've given a rock and it would work too.

00:27:31 But anyway, keys look nicer. This is a promise of something that's to come. And he tells him, when you get these keys, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." So at least part of the keys he's going to get are these sealing keys, right? And so just keep that in mind and we're going to return to it as we get to chapter 17. There's a follow-up to this story. It's really interesting. He charges his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. That's interesting because at some point that becomes their major job to tell everyone that he is Jesus the Christ.

Hank Smith: 00:28:03 Not yet. Not yet.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:28:05 Yeah. He's engineering the timing of all of this.

John Bytheway: 00:28:07 Wait for it.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:28:09 Yeah, that's right. Wait for it. That's good. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples." Really, you pronounce that word show, even though it doesn't look like it. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." This declaration, once they have declared firmly they know who he really is, he can start to take them to the next step of what that means.

00:28:38 Now, we're going to see they really struggle with it, but it's not a coincidence that what we call the passion predictions, the prophecies about his suffering and death, they follow immediately upon this declaration. They're ready for the next step. He's taken them to one level. It's time to start to move them to the next level, and it's going to take a while to move them to that next level. It doesn't come easily. So it's taken a while to get to this point. Now, we're ready to go onto the next point. Just like any good teacher, he assesses where they are and then we're ready for the next step.

Hank Smith: 00:29:08 Yeah. And I think it's John who later on after the resurrection says, "We never quite got there until he actually did it." This is John chapter 20, verse nine. "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." He's taken them there, but it's going to take them a while, like you said.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:29:25 And think again how he plays the long game. He's preparing them for something he knows they're not going to get until after it's happened, but they need to have this teaching now so they can get it after it's happened.

John Bytheway: 00:29:36 It seems that even Peter took out his sword when they came to take Jesus and maybe even then was like, "Okay, here's our political Messiah that's going to deliver us from the Romans by force." And even up until then, "No, I'm not that kind of Messiah. We've got bigger enemies like sin and death, and I'm going to conquer those."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:29:54 You're absolutely right. Peter still doesn't get it even as it's happening. Peter is still doing actually what we see him here. That's perfect because we see Peter right here in verse 22. "Then Peter took him." Now, I love Peter. I love Peter so much, and one of the things that I love about Peter is how much he loves Christ. He loves Christ.

Hank Smith: 00:30:15 He's so passionate. Yeah.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:30:17 He wants to be with him no matter what. "If that means I can't wait in the boat, I need to walk on the water to get to you. If later it means I can't wait till the boat is ashore, I'm going to jump out and swim to be with you. If that means I'm going to pull out my sword to stop someone from taking you away from me, if that means I will deny knowing you so I can be near you during your trial." Whatever it is, Peter's going to do whatever it takes to be with the Savior because he loves, just loves the Savior. And as a result, sometimes it makes it a little bit harder for him to understand. He's too influenced by what the world around him has taught, which is the Messiah will do a certain thing. And so he's saying, "You're not going to die. You're going to lead us to this other place and this other way," because that's what he's been taught.

00:30:59 So he says, "Be it far from thee Lord. This shall not be unto thee." No, you can't die. That's not how this is going to work because that's not how I understand it to work. And I can't fault Peter for going with the best of his understanding. He's being taught something that goes against what he has always been taught. And that's in some ways the story of our discipleship. If

we are going to understand the things of God, the things of God are of such a higher level in this world, it means in the end it will probably contradict almost everything we've ever thought or known. By the time we're exalted, we'll probably have to have given up all the ways we're thinking right now.

00:31:37 And that's tough. That means that there are going to be a number of times where, as we progress to become more godly, we're going to have to think of things in a way that is different than how we've been taught or thought we were being taught or had come to understand them, even gospel things. Joseph Smith used to say that his greatest struggle was to try and get people to understand the things of God because they were so saturated in the things they'd already been taught.

Hank Smith: 00:32:01 Yeah. He said, "I can't teach the saints all I want to teach them because the moment I teach them something new, they fly to pieces."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:32:07 That's exactly right.

Hank Smith: 00:32:08 Like glass.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:32:09 Yeah. Like glass. Or he uses a metaphor. It's like trying to split a log using a cornbread as a wedge and a pumpkin as a dodger or like the hammer.

Hank Smith: 00:32:16 Right.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:32:16 That's a great metaphor.

John Bytheway: 00:32:16 That's right.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:32:18 Okay. You're right. You're not going to split a log that way. That's what it's like trying to unteach people so that you can teach them. And that's what Peter's in the process of. So I don't know that we can fault Peter, but the Savior is again fairly explicit here because, "He turns and says unto Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.'" So this is exactly what we're talking about, and he is really clear about it with Peter to the point where he calls him Satan.

Hank Smith: 00:32:46 Wow.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:32:47 Which, again, means adversary. So it may mean he's just saying like, "You're being my adversary here. Why do you want to be my adversary? I am telling you how things should be. Don't disagree with me. You have to start to think of things the way I'm trying to get you to think of them rather than the way that the world has taught you to think of them." And I know you've talked about this elsewhere on the podcast, so I don't want to turn this into an advertisement. You're the biggest sponsor of the movie or the series, The Chosen. But I will tell you one of my favorite lines from that, so much so that I even bought the T-shirt that says it. It's when the Savior says, "Get used to different." That's what we have to do. If we're going to be godly instead of worldly, we have to get used to different.

Hank Smith: 00:33:28 Yeah.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:33:28 We have to stop thinking the way we have been thinking and get used to different, to godly things.

Hank Smith: 00:33:34 Be open to what he wants to do. I've always thought that too, Kerry, that he says, "Get thou behind me, Satan," he's just saying, "Don't tempt me. This is hard enough for me to know what's going to happen. I need my friends around me to help me do this hard thing, not be against it."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:33:51 Yeah, I agree. And also for you to start to understand it. Right. Quit being influenced. And I think that's exactly what he's saying. You could almost say that President Nelson's talk about finding peace and rest and not trying to go about things the world's way rather than God's way is summed up by this, "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." It's the same principle.

00:34:13 And then he goes onto some even harder things. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.'" And we have a Joseph Smith translation variance there where he explains more. Take up his cross is to deny himself all ungodliness and every worldly lust and keep my commandments. So it's basically what we've been talking about. Let God prevail instead of the world.

Hank Smith: 00:34:36 You have to give up the things of the world.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:34:38 And it's going to be tough. Let's just be clear. It's going to be tough. As President Nelson said in that same talk I was just referencing, don't expect it's going to be easy. It's not going to

be easy. It's just easier than all the alternatives. The worldly alternative, it's not easier than this. It seems like it at the beginning, but by the end, it's not.

- Hank Smith: 00:34:57 I always find myself thinking of section 121. " Many are called, but few are chosen", many are called, but few show up. Why do they not show up? Because their hearts are set so much on the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men. They don't learn one lesson, just a single lesson that the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven. You have to shed off all that worldliness in order to reach the Savior.
- John Bytheway: 00:35:24 Even our favorite ones though, Hank?
- Hank Smith: 00:35:26 Yeah, even your favorites.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:35:28 Even your favorite sins. Darn.
- John Bytheway: 00:35:30 Did President Nelson say that too?
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:35:31 Yeah, in that same talk. No, what he teaches in Matthew chapter 16, verse 25, we think we get an even little bit of an expanded version of that in the Mark account. So we're going to jump back to Mark. I told you we'd jump back and forth a bit today. That's why I've got both my bibles here. So we'll go to Mark chapter eight. Verse 33 in Mark chapter eight was where he takes [inaudible 00:35:52] and says, "You savor not the things of God but the things of men." Then verse 34 of Mark chapter eight, "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' So we got that already. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
- 00:36:23 That is one of the more profound lessons we can learn. As long as you are seeking after yourself, and we live in an incredibly individualistic society, so many of the messages, even if they're about something else, they have this subtle little message that this is about you and you doing what you want for you. And don't let other people tell you to think differently or behave differently or dress differently or whatever else. This is about you doing you.

00:36:48 I want to get rid of the saying "You do you," and I want to change it to the saying, "You do God's you." Look at what God can see in you and become what God wants you to be instead of being the limited you that you are right now. Why settle for that limited you? But so often in this incredibly individualistic society, it's about seeking things for yourself. And Christ is telling us, "No, this is about doing things for God and others." That's when you'll find yourself, but you can't find it if you're focusing on finding yourself. A journey to find yourself is bound to fail. You'll find yourself when you've forgotten yourself. That's counterintuitive, but this is one of those things we have to unlearn. That's the Godly way of thinking, not the worldly way of thinking.

John Bytheway: 00:37:33 I like that Jesus to show us the way and he says, "I am the way." He didn't say, "Find your own way," or, "Find your truth," or, "Find your north." He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." And like you said, he never said, "You do you." He said, "You do me, what manner of men ought ye to be."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:37:48 That's exactly right.

John Bytheway: 00:37:48 "You're trying to be like me. You're not trying to be like you."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:37:51 That's exactly right.

John Bytheway: 00:37:52 Look at the trouble you've gotten into trying to be you.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:37:55 Yeah, yeah. And why do you want to settle for something that limited anyway, honestly? But I'm not someone who doesn't like himself. I like myself, but why do I want to be satisfied being this when I can be more?

John Bytheway: 00:38:06 Yeah. And I think that President Nelson quoted one of my favorite Ezra Taft Benson lines about men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover he can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. So you're not losing or giving up or sacrificing anything by giving your life to God because he'll make more out of your life than you can.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:38:26 Yeah, I mean, it's a little bit like saying, "I guess you sacrifice the caterpillar when you become the butterfly, but why do you want to not become the butterfly?"

John Bytheway: 00:38:36 But what a good trade.

Hank Smith: 00:38:38 Similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 10, the apostolic discourse. He says, "He that findeth his life shall lose it and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." I love this, Kerry. This is totally opposite than what you think, but you've got to let go of your individual lifestyle, invest fully in me, and you'll find what you're looking for.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:39:00 Yeah. And that's why I love both what you're saying. I think it ties in really well with what John said, where he says, "I am the way." When you are forgetting about yourself, you have to first lose yourself in serving God, and that will also turn you into serving others. But you have to come to Christ. That's where you have to go. Forget about yourself, make your entire life about serving God. Now, that's going to include you have to go to work and put food on the table and all that other stuff, but keep in mind that you're doing that because you're serving Christ. And I have to say this verse 36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" It reminds me of probably my favorite line from my favorite play, which is A Man for All Seasons, which I know President Monson also liked.

00:39:42 It's just such a fantastic play, and you can see a couple versions of it. I'm just going to tell you that the Charlton Heston version is most faithful to the actual play, and Charlton Heston directs and stars in it. And you get this great line at the end where Richard Rich has perjured himself in order to become the governor of Wales basically. And you get this great line from Thomas Moore where he says, "It profit the man nothing if he gained the whole world and lose his own soul." But for Wales? You gave up your soul for Wales? Really? Is that worth it? And I can't tell you how many times that line has come back to haunt me as I've been about to do something that would get me this... Even playing a game, and I can find a way. "Well, they wouldn't notice if I did this, and I'll win this game." And I'm like, "But for Wales? Like winning the game is worth not being honest?" How stupid is that?

John Bytheway: 00:40:32 A piece of your soul.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:40:35 Yeah. Yeah. So that line comes to me all the time, "But for Wales?" But it's taken directly from verse 36 there, and I think verse 38 is also worth thinking about. And I just would ask everyone to think about this verse in the way you interact with people not of our faith when it comes to our beliefs about tough issues, social issues or whatever else, including our academic colleagues and anyone else. Just think about this verse. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my

words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." We have to admit, sometimes it is embarrassing and it's difficult and you know you're going to be mocked when you stand up for the things of God.

00:41:23 That's just absolutely going to happen. And I know in the academic world, it's especially is going to happen because there's such an anti-religious bent in academia in general. But this is a verse I think of when I find myself kind of wanting to hedge a little bit, explaining our beliefs or hedge a little bit standing up for them. And I think, "You know what? I really don't want to be ashamed of Christ because I really don't want him to be ashamed of me. I'd really like him to be my full force advocate." That's what I want. Not, "Well, sorry, you were ashamed of me, and so this is how it's working out."

John Bytheway: 00:41:56 It's pretty easy in the chapel to take upon you the name of Christ. But then...

John Bytheway: 00:42:00 ... when we take the sacrament, pretty easy to be a member of the church in the chapel, but then we go out for the next six days into the world and have to remember. I'm trying to represent and I don't want to be ashamed. Thanks for reading it that way.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:42:15 Yeah. There are times where I do want to soften the language when someone asks me. I've been in lunches, at academic conferences and they ask me, "So why does your church teach this about marriage? Or why does your church teach this about word of wisdom," or whatever? That comes up a lot because they're all drinking or whatever. And there are times where I kind of want to soften it a little bit. It's hard not to in the face of where everyone there is going to say, "What? What's wrong with you?" This verse helps me a little bit. I'm not saying I succeed every time, but it helps.

Hank Smith: 00:42:42 I've always thought if I was sitting next to Paul, he'd be like, "I'll tell him." Romans 1, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." You might be ashamed. I'm not ashamed. I'll say it how it is.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:42:54 That's certainly true of Paul. He's not going to mince words either, is he? Maybe sometimes he should. But anyway. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:43:00 It reminds me of Elder Clayton Christensen that wrote that book about everyday missionaries, and such a good point that how was your weekend? Why not say, oh, church was awesome this

week? Instead of what you did on Saturday, why not say, I heard the best talk on Sunday? Very inspiring talk in my church or we had the best lesson. And this is just another way not to be ashamed, but to say, "I love this. It's the power of God unto salvation. It's the best. I love my church. I love hanging out with these people and I struggle, but it's given me a path and hope and a reason for everything."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:43:38

That's good stuff. All right. Let's hit at least a few more. There are at least two more stories that I want to touch on that I think are really, really important. There are several more we could touch on. We may not have time for all of them. But chapter 17 in Matthew, we'll go back to Matthew.

00:43:52

So it's continue on this story, after Caesarea Philippi, we get after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. Now there are a lot of people who debate where is this mountain? And the two leading candidates are Mount Hermon, and I know people who are so sure it's Mount Hermon, they feel like it's blasphemy to say it's anywhere else. The traditional site is Mount Tabor. I think that's a really good candidate as well. I lean towards that. I'm 51% sure it's that and 49% sure it's Mount Hermon, but I don't really know.

00:44:23

Part of the reason I lean towards that a little bit is it's actually about a six-day journey from Caesarea Philippi to Mount Hermon. So that's part of it. But I don't want to take that too far because I think that it's likely that Matthew's doing something else here as well.

00:44:36

Remember, Matthew loves to bring in things for a Jewish audience. And there's this great story in Exodus 24 where God is calling Moses and several of the leaders of Israel up to meet him in a high mountain and from when he calls them, it's six days until they get to be in his presence. And you get similar things happening, then you're going to have light and Moses's face is eventually going to shine and we're going to talk about that here. There are clouds and so on. There's a cloud here. So I think that there's an intentional parallel being made and Moses is going to be here as well and the glory of God.

00:45:11

So I think there's an intentional parallel being made between the experience at Mount Sinai and the Mount of Transfiguration. So does that mean it wasn't literally six days later? No, it's probably six days later. A lot of times God has things happen literally in a way that symbolically teaches us and reminds us of things. So maybe he had them go to Mount

Tabor, so it would be six days later, or maybe they just hung out in Caesarea Philippi for six days. That part seems odd to me. But anyway, however it works.

00:45:37 And I will also tell a story, just an experience I had at Mount Tabor that made this a little bit more real because it talks about them being kind of overshadowed and they're not seen by other people and even a cloud that's there. You've probably been to Mount Tabor where they've built a church to commemorate this, and it's got three parts throughout. One for Jesus, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and as you kind of come up, there's all this garden area, then there's a gateway, and in that gateway, you can see the church and it's maybe about 70 yards away or so that you can picture yourself. If you were standing at the furthest part of your church parking lot and there's the church building, you can see it pretty easily. You can always see it.

00:46:15 I was there one time when literally as I was standing there looking at that church, a cloud descended. It was just the weather pattern and the cloud descended and within about five minutes, I could not see that church. It's a huge church, you can see it really easily from there, but I couldn't see that church and it made me think of, "This could happen on Mount Hermon just as well as on Mount Tabor."

00:46:35 But it really made me think about how you could be at a place where maybe there's a Roman garrison over here, there are other people over there, this cloud descends, you are really, really by yourself. The Savior can do... when that cloud descends, he can do whatever he wants with those apostles. They are secluded and veiled from the world as it were, as the veil comes off for them.

00:46:54 To me it's a cool image to think about. I think something similar to that, whichever mountain they were on, and maybe it's not either of those, I don't know. But whichever mountain they're on, I think they have that kind of an experience. I like to try and picture a little bit what it would be like as we read it and make it kind of real that way. That's my thing.

John Bytheway: 00:47:12 Tabor is where we've all gone where it's quite a windy road and you have to drive up and take a shuttle and it's really windy and-

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:47:19 It's a hundred switchbacks. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:47:21 The dizzy drive. Yeah. Okay. That's Tabor.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:47:24      Yeah, they're in the Jezreel Valley, so it would be apart because it's the only mountain in this valley around it and it's just sitting by itself there and it's high for that area. Mount Hermon is high and it's the mountain in that area. So it's high and set apart. Either one of them fits the description.

John Bytheway: 00:47:38      The six days thing. Do you know the Sinai reference for that?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:47:42      Yeah. Exodus chapter 24 describes that experience and that's where they're going to renew the covenant and have blood sprinkled on them and several of them see God there, Jehovah.

John Bytheway: 00:47:52      That could be a parallel. Okay, I love that.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:47:54      Yeah, I think it is a powerful parallel to me. It's this covenant-making priesthood ordinance experience at Sinai. Verse one, "Jesus takes him up there," verse two, "and was transfigured before them and his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light. So white as the light. I think the word transfigured here is interesting because I find this kind of fun. I remember we did a podcast just a little over a year ago, that was the first one for the Old Testament year where we talked about Moses being transfigured, and that's one of the places we can learn a lot about transfiguration. I'm not sure that the way we usually use that word. So transfigured just means your figure is changed, so it certainly works for here. But the way we usually think of the word, the technical term for Latter-day Saints is that your nature is changed so that you can be in the presence of deity.

00:48:45      So I would guess that understanding of transfigured, the people being transfigured here are Peter, James and John. But Christ is certainly transfigured, if we're just going to go with the literal your figure is changed because it seems like this is where the veil comes off. I'm not the person who doctrinally declares that this is the case, but it seems to me that this is telling us that all the time he's been with his apostles and disciples and everything he's been doing on earth, his glory, his true nature is veiled. No one has seen the real Jesus. They're never seeing who he really is, and this is his moment for his closest apostles to see him for who he really is.

00:49:29      And that's an important thing to know as we are known as part of what it's like to be in the celestial kingdom. And we've been talking as a church quite a bit led by President Nelson and I've been writing about in my books and so on, this idea that covenant is because God wants a close relationship with us and

part of that close relationship is about we have to become something that is capable of us really knowing each other.

00:49:52 I think this is a profound moment for the Savior and for his apostles, for them for a moment to know what the Savior is really like, to have his glory unveiled and his face shines. Just like Moses' will shine so much, he has to veil his face before the Israelites. His face shines and his raiment is like light. They see his glory for a moment. After this is going to be veiled, they're going to go down. It's going to be back to things as normal, but for a moment, this intimacy of really sharing who he is with each other has to be profound on a number of levels, I would guess.

Hank Smith: 00:50:29 That's great, Kerry. It's right out of the Bible dictionary. "Peter James and John saw the Lord in a glorified and transfigured state." And according to section 63, the Doctrine & Covenants, they also saw a vision of the earth as it will appear in its future glorified condition. So they're looking around seeing everything in a different way.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:50:49 They get to see how things are really, really are and how they really will be.

John Bytheway: 00:50:53 Yeah, that's the definition of truth.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:50:55 There are a number of stages in what happens on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the first one seems to be finally seeing who this being, who they have been following and worshiping and have given their lives to, finally seeing what they had understood in some ways, finally seeing really, what he's like. But the next step is the bestowal of some keys. So this is where that promise that we saw in Matthew 16 verse 19, that they would give him keys. This is where it's going to happen. We've got verse three and behold there appeared unto them, Moses and Elias, read Elias there, talking with him.

00:51:31 This is a really crucial thing. I'm assuming that the Savior gives them some priesthood keys. I don't know, but I would assume that the Savior gives them some priesthood keys. But we know Moses and Elijah give them priesthood keys, and this in fact would be the reason that Moses and Elijah were translated so they could appear here. They don't need to be translated. And we're going to talk in just a second and even read where they appear to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple.

00:51:54 They don't need to be translated for that because by then the resurrection has happened and they can appear as resurrected beings. But this is pre-resurrection, so if they are going to appear to Peter, James and John and give them keys by physically laying their hands on them, that's why they had to be translated so that they could have physical bodies to lay on these other physical bodies and give these keys.

Hank Smith: 00:52:14 Oh, that's the Lord really planning in advance.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:52:17 Yeah. He plays a long game.

Hank Smith: 00:52:19 Yeah, don't let them die. We're going to need those bodies here.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:52:23 Yeah, that's exactly right. And they're separated by quite a bit of time, Moses and Elijah, but they become traveling buddies. All right.

Hank Smith: 00:52:30 Yeah.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:52:30 Now that we're translated, let's hang out together, we'll travel around and go visit people together.

John Bytheway: 00:52:34 Where do you go during the interim? How long are you waiting as a translated being? Is there a waiting room that, "Wow..."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:52:42 Yeah. Well probably Moses is saying, "Oh, you think that's cool Elijah? Let me show you, I can part this water." And Elijah, "Oh, you think that's cool? Wait till you see my chariot in a fire." So they have a good time together. But I think we can understand what happens on the Mount of Transfiguration better if we go to read section 110 and read what happens in the Kirtland Temple because I think that's probably a more full account of something similar that would've happened in the Mount of Transfiguration.

00:53:07 And typically when people do this, they want to just jump to the part where you see Moses and Elijah. But remember the first thing on the Mount of Transfiguration was seeing Christ in his glory. So I'd say let's look at that. We got in section 110. So again, to set the stage, this is in the Kirtland Temple after it's been dedicated and after the dedicatory prayer that is section 109, this is an experience that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery have when they pull some of these curtains apart to separate them from others, and they're where these pulpits of the Melchizedek priesthood are.

John Bytheway: 00:53:37 Okay, section 110 verse 2.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:53:39 Yeah, even one through three. Why don't we do one through three?

John Bytheway: 00:53:42 Okay. Yeah. "The veil was taken from our minds and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breast work of the pulpit before us, and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold in color like amber, his eyes were as a flame of fire. The hair of his head was white like the pure snow, his countenance shown above the brightness of the sun, and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah saying..."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:54:10 This seems to be really similar to what Peter, James, and John saw in the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ, right? They see him in his full glory. That's the first thing, and I wish we had more time, we could read all the wonderful things he says about their sins being forgiven and he's accepting the house and so on and so on. But let's jump maybe... Hank, can you read for us verses 11 through 13, still in section 110.

Hank Smith: 00:54:33 Doctrine and Covenants 110:11-13, "After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us, and Moses appeared before us and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth and the leading of the 10 tribes from the land of the north. After this, Elias appeared and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham saying that in us and our seed, all generations after us should be blessed. After this vision closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us, for Elijah, the prophet who was taken to heaven without tasting death stood before us and said," and he quotes Malachi.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:55:11 Good. And all those things. Maybe jump down to verse 16 and read that as well.

Hank Smith: 00:55:16 "Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands, and by this you may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near even at the doors."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:55:26 Now that's interesting. We get this Elias that's mentioned in verse 12 there. Again, that's the Greek version of the name Elijah. We know that becomes a title for someone who's a forerunner. So is this one John the Baptist that works for the gospel of dispensation of Abraham or something, or is this someone else's? Some kind of a forerunner.

00:55:45 That Greek name of Elijah becomes the title for a forerunner because of the prophecy in Malachi that Christ will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. So we know John the Baptist is an Elias, so he's a forerunner. There are a number of people that fulfill his forerunner role, and I don't know exactly who the Elias is in verse 12, and there's some indication that there may have been someone else who filled a kind of an Elias role on the Mount of Transfiguration. There's some suggestion that maybe John the Baptist is there. So I don't know what his role would've been and he would not be resurrected yet. So I don't know.

Hank Smith: 00:56:18 He's not there to give keys.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:56:19 Yeah. The key thing we do know is that Moses has the keys for the gathering of Israel, and Elijah has these sealing keys that were mentioned in verse 19 of chapter 16 about being bound in heaven and loose in heaven and so on. Those sealing keys, which apparently are also associated with, as we learned from the Doctrine and Covenants, the keys of this dispensation. Those keys are bestowed upon Peter, James and John, just like they will be upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery so that the work of gathering and sealing, and the sealing is really about gathering in the hereafter.

00:56:54 So the work of gathering and this life and the next can really take place with the authority of God. All the keys that they need to move the kingdom forward are bestowed upon them, I would presume by Christ and Moses and Elijah and maybe by some others there on the Mount of Transfiguration. And again, I just love that we have that same parallel happening in the Kirtland Temple.

00:57:19 And by the way, just as kind of your gee whiz, because the tradition grows up that Elijah would've return on a Passover, and the day he appeared in the Kirtland temple ended up to be Passover that year. I think it's a fantastic fulfillment of that prophecy.

John Bytheway: 00:57:33 Was it April 3rd, 1836?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:57:35 I believe so. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:57:37 There's a JST footnote in the Mark 9 account of the Mount of Transfiguration where it says, "They appeared unto them, Elias with Moses." And the footnote says, or in other words, John the Baptist and Moses. So that's where we get that idea that...

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:57:52 That's exactly right. And it puzzles me because I really don't know what role John the Baptist would play, but I'm not the one who can say, "John, you can't come." So all right, if he wants to come, fine, he can come.

John Bytheway: 00:58:01 Yeah. There's a chart in the Religion 211 Manual, it has everyone on the Mount of Transfiguration and the reference and the restoration of the gospel. And this is what you've been talking about, Kerry, but I love the symmetry there, that the very same characters there, the very same ones who came into the Kirtland Temple and all of those same characters, there's a symmetry to that, which well, of course they did. And there's a beautiful painting in there right inside the Kirtland Visitor Center.

00:58:32 The last time I was there, they moved it, but it was really cool. It showed Joseph and Oliver sitting there in the Kirtland Temple and these figures kind of coming down from above bestowing keys. You see it and you think, "Wow, that might have been what that looked like." That's really cool.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 00:58:48 And it's incredibly significant.

Hank Smith: 00:58:51 Kerry, I love that you're kind of saying, "I don't know exactly what happened here." This is from Elder McConkie. He said, "Our synoptic authors," that's Matthew, Mark, and Luke, "Make brief mention of in reality, it is scarcely more than allusion to what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration when they and Jesus spent a sacred night and wrapped in these visions of eternity."

00:59:14 He says, "Later in the providence of the Lord, the saints know some things that the world does not know about the spiritual outpouring of divine grace that fell on the Mountain of Transfiguration. But even Latter-day Revelation does not set forth the full account. And until men and women attain a higher state of spiritual understanding than they now enjoy, they will continue to see through a glass darkly and know only in part the visionary experiences of the presiding officers of the Meridian Church. That which is known, however, singles out this night is one of the most important and glorious in the lives who saw within the veil and who heard the voices of the heavenly participants."

00:59:52 When Peter is much later in life, the Savior has been crucified and resurrected, and he has a chance to reflect back on his experiences with Jesus, and he could think of anything from walking on water to feeding the 5,000, but when he mentions...

2 Peter chapter one, this is verse 16. This is Peter speaking much later in life. He said, "We have not followed cunning devised fables when we made known", to say, this isn't fiction. "We made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

01:00:28 And then he's saying, "We saw him raise Lazarus from the dead. We saw him walk on water."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:00:34 We saw him resurrected.

Hank Smith: 01:00:35 Right. He says, "He received from God the Father, honor and glory when there came a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him on the Holy Mount." So again, I think Elder McConkie is right here. Sorry, I'm sure everyone assumes that Elder McConkie is right, but there seems to be some kind of shadow over what truly happened on this mountain.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:01:04 Absolutely. And with what you were talking about with Peter there, that is referring to the next part, the next stage of what we could read here, which is verse five. So we talked in verse four about Moses and Elijah. Well verse three and four. But verse five, "While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them."

01:01:23 So it's while Peter was saying we should build tabernacles for these guys. "A bright cloud overshadowed them and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, arise and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man except Jesus only."

01:01:49 I think we also can't underestimate the importance of that witness from God. And you see the importance in the way, as you said, it's what Peter reflects on later. Some of the apostles had been disciples of John and may have heard God bear witness when Christ was baptized, but not all of them. And it seems like Peter, James and John actually come just a little bit later. Peter's brother Andrew was probably there. But this is important, and when we talk about the doctrine of crisis, it's outlined, say in 2 Nephi 31 and 32, or 3 Nephi 11 or 35:27, we usually talk about faith, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost and enduring to the end.

- 01:02:23 But if you look at the whole thing, the way it's outlined there, when Nephi and others say, "This is my doctrine," at the end they say, "That's my doctrine. Everything in between is my doctrine." The first thing in all of them is that each member of the Godhead bears witness of the other members of the Godhead, so that we're all entitled to divine witnesses of each member of the Godhead, Christ and the Holy Ghost bear witness of the Father, the Father and the Holy Ghost bear witness of the Son, and the Father and the Son, bear witness of the Holy Ghost.
- 01:02:51 This is an important element in that. Surely, they're having the Holy Ghost bear witness of Christ, but now these three specifically hear the Father bear witness of Christ so that they have had two divine witnesses of who Christ is and that he is doing the Father's will and that they should listen to him. And that's really powerful. And now, as we go back to what we were talking about earlier, because I am reading this apostolic account of that, and have had the Holy Ghost bear witness to me, then I have testimony of this too, and have received that divine witness from the Father, because the Holy Ghost has confirmed that the Father really said that. And so we can all have that experience, as that rock of revelation, that rock of apostolic testimony can make an effect in all of our lives. And we can know with surety that Jesus is God's son.
- John Bytheway: 01:03:41 I love looking at the footnote there in Matthew 17:5, and looking at all these other places where we have heard the voice of the Father. So, footnote 5c, Matthew 3:17, as you mentioned, the Baptism of Jesus. 3 Nephi 11:7. His appearance to the righteous in the new world. Joseph Smith History 1:17. It's not a long list of the times where we've heard the voice of the Father, but because as you said, he's our mediator, Jesus is our advocate and mediator, but the Father testifies of him in this place.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:04:19 Yeah. That's profound stuff. And right after that you get him kind of talking about John the Baptist being an Elijah or an Elisha, a forerunner as well. So, as long as we're talking about this experience, comparing it to the Kirtland experience and we're talking about covenants and priesthood keys and ordinances and so on, it's pretty clear that there's Temple element to this. And that was also talked about by Joseph Fielding Smith in his book Doctrines of Salvation Volume Two, page 165. He said, "I'm convinced in my own mind that when the Savior took the three disciples up on the Mount ... "

01:04:51 I'm just going to stop and say here when you get someone saying, "I'm convinced in my own mind," I think that's the way of saying, "I'm not pronouncing this as official doctrine. This is what I as a very informed believer, believes." All right? So, that's how I take it anyway. "That when the Savior took the three disciples up on the Mount, which is spoken of as a mount of transfiguration, He there gave unto them the ordinances that pertained to the house of the Lord and that they were endowed. That was the only place they could go. That place became holy and sacred for the rights of salvation that were performed on that occasion." At least Joseph Fielding Smith, who's a fairly decent source, believed that some form of endowment and ordinances took place. I have no doubt they were endowed with power on high. I have no doubt that there were ordinances that were part of that. It just makes sense that this was a sacred Temple experience.

John Bytheway: 01:05:42 And it's up on a mountain and mountains are nature's temples.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:05:46 I think all the original temples are mountains, and then later on, we built buildings. Well, so when they come down from there, that's just such a profound experience. But there's at least one more story I'd like to share. It's meaningful for me in a number of ways. When they come down, there's a hubbub going on. And we want to look a little bit in the Matthew account, and then we want to look in the Mark account as well. So if we continue with that Matthew account, after he explains to them about John, we get verse 14. And, "When they were come to the multitude, there came to him, a certain man kneeling down to him and saying ... " Now, I'm going to stop. I want to go to the Mark account. I think it has just a little bit more there. But I wanted you to see the continuity there in the Matthew account.

01:06:24 The Mark account I think is just so beautiful. And so, Mark 9:14. "And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them and scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him." And he asked the scribes, "what question you with them?" "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth unto him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me." But he will later say, well, this kind only comes out by fasting and prayer.

01:07:10 I'm grateful for that as well to know that some trials are not going to be ended immediately, and it's not going to be a simple thing. It may be years of fasting and praying. I know there are some things that I've fasted for so many times. And, as we've talked about earlier, we see miracles along the way. But fasting and prayer is a key element in this. I want to point out one other thing. We're going to just jump forward just a little bit in this story and then we'll read the verse again. But later when the same father is speaking to the Savior, verse 22, he says, "Ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Elder Holland once spoke about this and he said, "Note the "us" in here, because when a child suffers, the family suffers. The whole family suffers."

01:08:08 And sometimes that's in a real way. I have a nephew who's very disabled and it literally ... He's now what, 15? Or maybe he's 14, about to turn 15. But it literally has taken over the entire life for that entire family. And we talked about some of the struggles that my family has had earlier. It's taken over everything in my wife's and my life, besides my child's life, for that whole time. Right? It becomes your whole life. You all suffer, both because of how much it takes over what you can do, but because of the way your heart is poured out for your child. This man doesn't want to see his son cast himself into a fire. Who wants to see that, right? Or the other things he does to hurt himself. It just impacts everyone. And I think that there are probably, again, a lot of listeners who are experiencing this and can identify with what Elder Holland was talking about when he highlights the "us" of this experience. And also, the interaction of the faith of the Father with what will go on with that son.

Hank Smith: 01:09:11 Elder Holland says, "I can hardly read these words without weeping. The plural pronoun "us" is obviously used intentionally. The man is saying in effect, our whole family is pleading. Our struggle never ceases. We are exhausted. Our son falls into the water, he falls into the fire. He is continually in danger and we are continually afraid. We don't know where else to turn. Can you help us?"

John Bytheway: 01:09:37 Yeah. Man!

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:09:38 You can feel it, man. Elder Holland paints that so well, doesn't he?

John Bytheway: 01:09:41 Mm-hmm.

- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:09:42 And I can see my nephew and his family, I can see ourselves, I can see others, I can see that. "Please, please help us. We're pleading with you." Sometimes it's going to take a bit, but I believe ... In our own family situation, I can't tell you how many times I've had the sweet assurance this is going to work out okay, and that's just enough to get you through the next month of, "It's not yet okay. It's more okay maybe than it was, but it's not okay yet."
- 01:10:07 So let's get to verse 20, is where he's foaming on the ground and then we just read verse 21. He says, it's been on him since he's a child and we read verse 22. So let's go to verse 23 and 24, which I think is in many ways where the heart of the matter is. "Jesus said unto him, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.'" That is so crucial. Right? But then look. I love verse 24, it's one of my favorite verses anywhere. "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.'"
- 01:10:45 Now, that's something really profound. And I know I've seen depictions of this where he says, "I believe," and then they have the guy who's acting as a Savior look at him, like, "Do you really believe?" And he says, "Help thou mine unbelief." I guess that's one way of interpreting it. And it's typical Mark language to say "straightway." Right? But the way he says it sounds to me like he immediately says this whole thing. I think that this is the father saying, "I believe, but I need your help to believe more." There are a couple of things that we should touch on with this. Elder Holland, used this example. He says, "When you're struggling, either with doubts or with having enough faith or with receiving blessings, lead with your belief."
- 01:11:25 Note the Father doesn't say, "Lord, I need help with my unbelief. I do believe, but I need help with my unbelief." He leads with his belief. He emphasizes that, "I do believe. I need some help believing more or continuing to believe," but don't emphasize the doubts and the unbelief. Lead with your belief and then ask God to help with whatever part you're not believing, rather than instead, focusing on the unbelief and going to the world to ask for help with further unbelief. I think there's something really powerful in that. I think that this is something that we probably all have felt at times and something that we all need to feel. We can recognize, "I have faith right now. I'm not sure I have faith enough for this and I still have enough faith to ask for more faith."
- 01:12:13 In fact, I think this is what we see with Peter. So, his faith is shaken enough he starts to sink as he's walking on water. But

what's the first thing he says? "Lord, save me." He still believes that Christ can save him. Right? That's what I think we see with this man, is this recognition that he has some belief. In fact, Alma teaches us what you need to start is just a desire to believe. If you have a desire to believe, you can start there. And then you can have belief and know that you need more belief. And as long as you are still turning to the Savior, not turning elsewhere, not looking at the waves, not looking at the world, but turning to the Savior, he can increase that belief, so that the miracle that you need can happen. Maybe it's eventually, but so that the miracle that you need can happen.

01:12:59 One of the reasons this verse speaks powerfully to me is an experience I had with it once. I mean, it was when I was on my mission and I had a companion. He's a Tongan companion, Elder Taumasela who was the most faithful person I've ever met. Incredibly faithful. Had so much faith and incredibly in tune with the Spirit, just in ways I can't even express. And we all felt this from him, everyone knew it. And there was one night we went out on splits. So I went with a ward mission leader and he went with the ward missionary and we did stuff. And I got sick pretty quickly, and the ward mission leader had to take us back to our apartment and wait for the other missionaries to get home so that ... I had a fever and I was shaking and my body was aching, and I didn't know what to do. I was just felt terrible. I didn't know what to do.

01:13:40 We had six of us that lived in that apartment and six missionaries. And my companion and some of the other missionaries got home. And I asked for a blessing and my companion gave me a blessing and said that I would be made whole and healed, right then. And they all stepped away and were talking and stuff and I'm still sick. And one of the other missionaries came over, bless his heart, and he said, "You know Elder Taumasela wouldn't have said that if it wasn't what was supposed to happen. So if you have enough faith, you'll be made whole." And I thought, "I believe that." And what came to my mind was, "Lord, I believe. Help mine unbelief." And just a wash of belief came over me, and for about five seconds I shook even more violently. And then I was completely 100% fine. No fever, no chills, no pains, nothing in my stomach, nothing. A hundred percent fine, because I had cried out ...

01:14:36 I know you talked with Jan Martin about memorizing scriptures. That's one that was just a part of me enough that I could just, in my hour of need reach out and say, "Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief." And he helped my unbelief, and a miracle happened in my life. And I don't know that it's always going to

be that quickly. Like I said, right now, I'd like for some things to be more quick in my own life, but I continue to pray this now. I continue to pray, as I seek for and expect miracles like President Nelson asked us to. I continue to say, "I believe. Help my unbelief," and I have seen miracles. Not always exactly the ones I wanted, but the ones that God knows we need, and you see it happening with his family.

01:15:15 It's not easy either with this young man. Verse 25, "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried out and rent him sore." This wasn't easy or fun. "Rent him sore and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose." That's just one of the most beautiful miracles, partially because it's a parent-and-child miracle and partially because of the struggle with it, and partially because of the healing and that particle of belief.

01:15:55 And it is, in connection with this miracle that the Savior will say, "If you have faith as a grain of a mustard seed", he will eventually teach them just a little bit of faith. And you come to me with it and, oh, what we can do together. Which reminds me of your quote earlier from President Benson. "Just turn your life over to Christ and see what he can do with that. You come with a little bit of belief, come to Christ, and what can happen is beyond what we can imagine."

Hank Smith: 01:16:20 Yeah. Elder Holland goes on to say, "I would say to all who wish for more faith, remember this man," just like you did, Kerry, "In moments of fear or doubt or troubling times, hold the ground you have already won. Even if that ground is limited in the growth, we all have to experience in mortality. The Spirit's equivalent of this boy's affliction or this parent's desperation is going to come to all of us. When those moments come, the resolution of which is not immediately forthcoming, hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes."

John Bytheway: 01:16:52 Yeah. That talk April, 2013 of Elder Holland called Lord, I Believe. And I'm so glad this story is in here, because it helps us as readers, as imperfect people to know, to identify with him maybe. "I've got some belief, but I've got some unbelief. But I can ask for help with that, with that unbelief and get it.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:17:15 Yeah. We all fit somewhere into this story. There's a part of us that fits somewhere into this story and the story of the man of

Bethsaida who was healed by stages. There's a part of our lives that can identify with those stories. Thank goodness for people who recorded them, so that we could find what we need in our own lives.

- Hank Smith: 01:17:36 Yeah. Kerry, this has been a fantastic day. What do you hope our listeners walk away with when it comes to this lesson this week?
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:17:45 I'm happy to answer that, and it's probably an answer that I give to just about everything. But what I hope is that they walk away, that they are able to feel how much God and his son love us, and how much they're willing to do for us. Whether that is to heal us by stages, to take our faith where it is and move it somewhere else, whether it is to reveal their full glory to us, whether that is to have people translated 1,000 years before, so that they can then come and bestow keys that we need.
- 01:18:17 Whatever it is, whether it be taking us in stages, we recognize Christ as a prophet, then we come to understand he's a Messiah, Son of God. They take us where we are. They love us so much, they will take us wherever we are and slowly bring us to be the beings that one day will be as glorious as what they saw on the Mount of Transfiguration, where we will be full of light and truth and glory and have joy beyond what we can even comprehend. And all of that is because they love us enough to covenant with us, be connected with us, and then suffer, for Christ to suffer and die for us, so that we can be transfigured or changed permanently into something better. God loves us. He just loves us.
- Hank Smith: 01:19:03 Yeah. Thank you, Kerry, for being here. Thank you for your time and your expertise. This has been a lot of fun. Grateful that you've been here. John, anything before we close up?
- John Bytheway: 01:19:14 Just that last thing, it just reminds me that the invitation to come unto Christ is a "come as you are" invitation.
- Hank Smith: 01:19:21 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 01:19:22 You don't have to be perfect first. It's come unto me. "Come unto Christ and be perfected in him," so it's "Come as you are, wherever you are. Even if you feel far away, just come."
- Hank Smith: 01:19:32 Just come.
- John Bytheway: 01:19:33 And that's his invitation to us. So thank you for that, Kerry.

Hank Smith: 01:19:37 Yeah. It's fun watching Peter get rebuked and praised, rebuked and praised.

John Bytheway: 01:19:41 Peter is constantly getting corrected. I think that's why we love him, because he's trying to do the right thing and he gets corrected a lot. But following the Savior.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:19:50 And that's us, isn't it? We're constantly being corrected. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 01:19:54 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 01:19:54 Corrected and praised. Corrected and praised. That's the life of a disciple. Awesome. Thank you to both of you for being here. John, I don't know if I thank you enough-

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 01:20:03 You can't thank John enough.

Hank Smith: 01:20:04 ... for being here.

John Bytheway: 01:20:05 I am so thankful to be here. Look at all my notes today. This has been great.

Hank Smith: 01:20:09 Well, we want to thank again, Dr. Kerry Muhlestein. We want to thank our Executive Producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and our founder, the late Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We have more New Testament coming up on FollowHIM. Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references are available on our website [followhim.co](http://followhim.co). Followhim.co. And you can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on Facebook and Instagram. All of this is absolutely free, so be sure to share with your family and friends. To reach those who are searching for help with their Come Follow Me study, please subscribe, rate, review, or comment on the podcast, which makes the podcast easier to find. Thank you. We have an amazing production crew we want you to know about David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilsen, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts and Ariel Cuadra. Thank you to our amazing production team.

## HOW DO I GAIN A TESTIMONY?



- Hank Smith: 00:04 Hello my friends. Welcome to another Follow Him Favorites. My name is Hank Smith and I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. Welcome John Bytheway.
- John Bytheway: 00:12 Thanks. Incredible, Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:13 Hank. It's awesome to be with you again.
- John Bytheway: 00:14 It's good-
- Hank Smith: 00:15 We're going to take one question from this week's lesson, John. We're in Matthew 15, 16, and 17 and in Mark 7, 8, and 9. Very similar stories this week. And our question is how do I gain a testimony? There's a section in Matthew chapter 16, Jesus says, "What do you think about me?"
- 00:34 And Peter says, "I know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- 00:40 Then Jesus answers and says, "You are awesome, Simon. Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven." I think the Savior gave us our key right there, John, that you didn't get it from another person, you didn't get that information from another person. You got that by revelation right out of the manual. A testimony of Jesus Christ comes by revelation. What do you have to add, John?
- John Bytheway: 01:04 Yeah, my brother-in-law, Jeff, he teaches seminary and he uses this formula that Jesus uses. He'll ask his classes often, "Okay, what have you heard out there? Because Jesus says, 'Whom do men say that I am. Okay, but what do you think? And then what has the Lord told you? Because Simon, you got that from God.'" I love that it's not even, "Simon, you got that from me," Jesus seems to be saying, "But you got that from God."
- 01:29 There's so many different clues in the scriptures of how to gain a testimony. The John 7:17 verse, "If you'll do His will, you will know of the doctrine." That comes by revelation as well. I hope that what people take away from this is yeah, ask and seek and

knock and ask God to tell you. Lots of different clues in the scriptures about how to gain a testimony. I love John 7:17. "If any man will do His will, he will know of the doctrine," and I think that's what Peter was doing. He was striving, he was trying to follow Christ and Peter made mistakes, but he kept trying and the Lord told Him. I loved when Jesus asked that question. This could be, don't you think, Hank, one of the shortest best testimony meetings ever right there?

- Hank Smith: 02:17 Absolutely. Yeah. One thing you've taught me, John, is if you lack information, there's plenty of places to get information. You can ask Google for information. Where's the closest pizza place to me? What time does the store close? There's so many places you can get information, but if you want wisdom, if you want a testimony, that's going to come by revelation and you can't Google a testimony, it doesn't work that way. We want it fast, right? Google can give us information so fast, it can give us billions of answers in half a second. That's not this process. If you tried that, that avenue to get a testimony, you're going to end up frustrated.
- John Bytheway: 02:57 Yeah. I tell my students, "My worry for you is that you want Google speed answers to golden questions and sometimes the Lord answers in His own way, in His own time." But Peter's doing what he's supposed to be doing, he's where he is supposed to be. That answer will come.
- Hank Smith: 03:13 Yep. John, wouldn't we say we absolutely encourage our listeners to go to the Lord with any question, but especially a testimony. If you want a testimony of Christ, of the church, you have got to go to the Lord and be patient with Him and come with what Moroni says, is a pure intent with sincere heart.
- John Bytheway: 03:36 I really think He wants to tell you, but we've got to trust Him how He does it, because it's by study and also by faith. We're going to study and we're going to learn and we're going to wrestle, but we're going to keep on asking too.
- Hank Smith: 03:48 Yeah, and I think part of getting an answer from the Lord is, are you willing to do what comes with that answer?
- John Bytheway: 03:55 Yeah. Maybe that's the real intent part in Moroni's promise. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 03:59 Check your willingness. Well, we hope you join us for our full podcast. It's called Follow Him. We have Dr. Kerry Muhlestein joining us on our full podcast. You can get it wherever you find

your podcast and then come back here next week. We'll do another Follow Him Favorites.