



*“Rejoice with Me; for I Have Found My Sheep Which Was Lost”*

## **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 are the lost among us? Dr. S. Michael Wilcox explores the themes of wealth and giving, the Sabbath and spirituality, and gratitude and distractions.

#### **Part 2:**

Dr. S. Michael Wilcox continues to explore the power and promise of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as he examines love and loss.

### **Timecodes:**

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. S. Michael Wilcox
- 01:29 Introduction of Dr. S. Michael Wilcox
- 02:35 Jesus teaches about wealth
- 07:36 A parable about building more barns
- 11:37 Why does God call this man a fool?
- 15:09 There are more important things than bigger barns
- 17:02 When death comes, we want to be giving
- 19:55 We have knowledge but are we spiritually wise
- 34:54 The danger of several types of pride
- 35:47 Jesus and velvet truths
- 43:07 The unjust steward
- 47:09 Lazarus and the rich man
- 54:55 What gulfs exist in our neighborhoods?
- 58:43 Seeing those in need
- 58:52 Theme of Luke 15
- 1:03:35 The lost sheep
- 1:06:45 End of Part 1–Dr. S. Michael Wilcox

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. S. Michael Wilcox
- 00:10 Parable of the lost coin
- 01:27 Parable of the Prodigal Son
- 01:54 There are many far countries
- 04:56 What is the real self?
- 06:05 Parables are meant to elicit emotions
- 08:45 There are no hired servants in heaven. Only sons & daughters.
- 15:50 Elder Holland “The Other Prodigal”
- 18:31 God’s kind of forgiveness
- 20:03 John Bytheway shares an experience about serving at the prison
- 22:35 The 10 lepers
- 24:12 Expectations, entitlement vs. gratitude for unexpected blessings
- 24:54 Dr. Wilcox shares experiences on deciding to be grateful
- 37:19 Looking at prayers to see through Jesus’ eyes in the New Testament
- 38:48 Jesus lifted people
- 40:25 Raising Lazarus from the dead, *if thou hadst been here*
- 51:47 Renascence by Edna St. Vincent Mallay
- 1:02:47 End of Part II–Dr. S. Michael Wilcox

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## **Biographical Information:**



S. Michael Wilcox received his PhD from the University of Colorado and taught for many years at the LDS Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah. He has spoken to packed crowds at BYU Education Week and has hosted tours to the Holy Land, to China, to Church history sites, and beyond. He has served in a variety of callings, including as bishop and counselor in a stake presidency. He has written many articles and books, including *House of Glory*, *Sunset*, *10 Great Souls I Want to Meet in Heaven*, *Twice Blessed*, and *Finding Hope*. He and his late wife, Laurie, are the parents of five children.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:15	As together, We follow Him.
Hank Smith:	00:00:20	Hello my friends. Welcome to a new episode of followHim. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my rich man co-host, John, Bytheway. John, you are a rich man.
John Bytheway:	00:00:33	It depends on how you define it, but I'll take that. We used to watch Fiddler on the Roof as kids, and my dad would always say, "Listen to this part right here." When Tevye would say, 'Would it spoil some vast eternal plan if I were a wealthy man?' Right at the end of the song. My dad, "That's my question."
Hank Smith:	00:00:52	That's awesome.
Dr. Michael Wilcox:	00:00:54	The nicest thing about that song really is the reason he most wants to be rich, though, which really factors in what you're doing here. "If I were rich, I'd have the time that I lack to sit in the synagogue and pray, and maybe have a seat by the eastern wall." Still a little pride there. "And I'd discuss the holy books with the learned men seven hours every day. That would be the sweetest thing of all." It's very Jewish, very lovely sentiment. The main reason is, so we have time to do what we're doing today, study the scriptures.
Hank Smith:	00:01:29	John, before we go any further, we probably ought to introduce our guest today. We needed a Bible expert and we have one here. Who's joining us?

John Bytheway: 00:01:36 Yes. And we're so glad to have Dr. S. Michael Wilcox, back with us again. And briefly, he received his PhD from the University of Colorado and taught for many years at the Institute of Religion, adjacent to the University of Utah. He's spoken at a campus education week for years, takes tours to the Holy Land, to China, church history sites, Antarctica, as we just talked about. He served in a variety of callings, including a bishop, a counselor in a stake presidency. And I'm actually looking at one of his most recent books, Holding on, Impulses to Leave and Strategies to Stay. Michael and his late wife, Laurie, are the parents of five children and 14 grandchildren, with one on the way in August. So we're really glad to have you back.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:23 One last one.

John Bytheway: 00:02:23 Yeah. One more.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:24 Thank you. It's always nice to be with you.

Hank Smith: 00:02:27 One more, and then you start a new product line. You start the great-grandkids.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:31 Yeah. Maybe one of these days, I'll be great-grandpa. We'll see.

Hank Smith: 00:02:35 Mike, our lesson today is packed with incredible stories and just profound teachings. Luke Chapter 12 through 17, and John Chapter 11, where do you want to start us out?

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:02:49 Oh, we can just start in chapter 12 and kind of go through. Maybe there'll be a few times we'll jump because there are some themes, certainly one major one that flows through those chapters, and that deals with wealth, money, financial issues, which, it's good to know that the Lord is aware of practical temporal things in our lives. And He gives us a little bit of counsel on those kinds of things say.

00:03:18 If I ask somebody, "Does Jesus teach more about family, which is so important to us in the New Testament or more about wealth?" A lot of people would be surprised that he doesn't teach a lot about family. We get some. We get to see him as a child. We get one great teenage lesson out of him at the temple when he effectively says to his parents what every teenager should say to a parent, "You may not know where I am. You may not know what I'm doing. You may not know who I'm with, but wherever I am, whatever I'm doing, and whoever I'm with, be assured I'll be about my father's business." Now, if every

teenager, every child just did that, they only need that one rule, see.

- Hank Smith: 00:04:05 That would be perfect.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:04:07 And we see Him as a son, at the wedding of Cana, and then on the cross, but hardly anything about marriage, He teaches. But He does have a lot about wealth, and financial matters, and some warnings, and there's at least five parables in this section that deal with it.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:25 So let's just jump in, since we have so much to do. We love to just learn from you, Mike. So John and I might jump in once in a while, but where do you want to start?
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:04:34 Well, let's start, I mean, like you said, there's a lot of things. Maybe we can pick up a few tiny things, but let's at least, look at some of those parables. Parables are designed to teach us that we're maybe not doing everything that we should be doing. Maybe we're not thinking the way we should be thinking. They're not aimed at the intellect, they're aimed at the conscience. And it's important to realize that because sometimes, we doctrinalize some of the parables, and I don't think that's what the Savior meant. They're aimed at not the intellect, but the conscience, to help us live better.
- 00:05:09 If I skip the first part of chapter 12, because we're not going to be able to do everything, and we pick it up in verse 13, one of the company, that would suggest probably those you travel with, and maybe not an apostle, but he traveled with more than them, said to him, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." And he said unto him, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" It's interesting. I just recently had this, almost every trip I ever go on, especially if we talk about Israel, Joseph and his brothers and forgiveness. Inevitably, I'm going to have one member of the group, sometimes more, talk to me about family problems. They're not talking to each other. They have difficulties. They're mad at each other. And I'm telling you, eight out of 10 times, it's over money and inheritance issues.
- 00:06:05 I just got back from a three-month run and not one week ago, I'm having a deep discussion with one of the members of the company, that her brothers are mad at her because of the dividing of the inheritance and it didn't come out well. And I've heard it so much and so many times that there's a part of me that says, "Maybe if you are arguing with family members over the inheritance, you ought not to have an inheritance."

John Bytheway: 00:06:37 It's ruining things.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:06:38 I don't mean that as a punishment. I mean, you can't handle it because it's become more important than family ties. So here, we have this very practical little story, it's going to give us a little parable, but a situation that is so often in the scriptures, so relevant and common to our lives. Not everybody's going to have inheritance issues, but a lot of families really deal with it, and sometimes they stop talking to each other. So the Savior says, "First of all, I don't want to be involved in these things." And then he says, "Take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life consists of not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Really, a great phrase. We sometimes assess ourselves by the things that we have, and He's trying to get them not to do that. We don't want wealth, money, things to divide family. Family is more important.

00:07:36 So now, it gives a little parable, the first of a number of parables. Like I said, there are four, five. I can count the prodigal son because the prodigal son is a parable about inheritance. It's really about forgiveness, but it's about inheritance too. So he spake a parable saying, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." I've been blessed plentifully. A lot of us have adequate and beyond. And he thought within himself, now as you go through these three verses, three little verses, I sometimes say, count the I's, the my's.

00:08:14 And you see part of this man's problem. "What shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits." And he said, "This will I do. I will pull down my barns and build greater." I'm going to come back to that phrase. "And there will I bestow all," keyword, "All my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine,'" We could add thine to the I's and the my's. "'Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'" So you can see right away, the emphasis.

00:08:55 Part of the problem is we tend to think of ourselves, maybe too much. Even the phrase, "Soul thou hast much goods." Part of me says the soul might say, "I don't eat any of this stuff. I eat different things." The soul, I think the Savior crafts his parables very, very well. And I think the fact that he says to the soul, because the soul doesn't need what he has in the barns. There is a tendency, and I think there is a warning the Savior's giving. Not only, don't fight over inheritances, don't let inheritances, don't let wealth divide families. Families are more important.

00:09:40 And the other thing I think he's suggesting here is, we do have a tendency to build greater. I call it the creeping average. I grew up in an average middle class home, 1200 square feet. It had three bedrooms, one for me, my mother, my two sisters had one. One bathroom and a little half bath, a kitchen, a living room. We had one TV, the family car, one telephone. This was standard middle class. The house I live in now, one that my children grew up. We have more. And what is considered average for my children and on my grandchildren has crept up quite a bit. Does that make sense? Not trying to condemn it, not trying to say it's wrong. I'm just saying there is a tendency in our lives sometimes to want to build greater and greater and bigger and more.

00:10:39 And so He starts this little parable with the warning, don't let it divide families. And maybe the question that we always ask in politics, are you better off now than you were four years ago? Maybe the proper answer is, I was fine four years ago. I'm fine now. I don't have to have more. I don't have to build greater. Then he finishes the parable with, "God said unto him." The scriptures are always very blunt. They always tell you the truth. Sometimes we don't like the truth. Sometimes the truth hurts. But there's a very blunt statement that assesses this problem. He simply says, "Thou fool." Now we want to be a little bit careful. We don't want to bash the wealthier, the rich. There's a lot of wonderful people who do really good things, but this man kind of has the I, my problem and the build greater problem and the want more problem.

00:11:37 So there's three reasons why God calls him a fool, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then who shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Number one, you don't know when you're going to die. I was in Cambodia just a little while ago and there's a lot of Hinduism there and Hindus like riddles. And one of the riddles that's in a series, the last question is, what is the greatest wonder on earth? It's a very famous one. And the answer is that people die every day, but nobody wakes up in the morning saying, "Today is my day." So he's saying that's the greatest wonder.

Hank Smith: 00:12:18 I think someone said once we all wake up like the turkey on Thanksgiving morning, thinking we're going to have lunch as usual.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:12:25 Yeah, that's a good way of saying it. You might be lunch. In Ecclesiastes, I know it's Old Testament and last year, Solomon gives the same idea. The answer to that question, "Who shall

those things be which thou hast provided?" The first thing you may die tonight.

00:12:45 The second thing, who's going to get it and what are they going to do with it? And in Ecclesiastes chapter two, one of the things that Solomon is concerned about, he says, "I hated all my labor under the sun." That's probably too strong of a word, "Because I should leave it unto the man that should be after me." I'm going to work all this and then I'm going to have to leave everything I got, "And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun." I was wise and knew I handled, but the next person didn't. "I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labor which I took under the sun. For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom and in knowledge and in inequity, yet to a man that hath not labored, therein shall he leave it for his portion. This is vanity."

00:13:38 There is a little bit of a sense of if you earn it and work for it, you're probably going to be more responsible in it, but if it's just given to you, you may waste it. Which parable in the New Testament teaches that fairly powerfully, even though that's not the purpose of the parable? And that is the prodigal son. So part of the wisdom Christ is helping us within financial matters might be, it isn't always wise to leave a lot of money, even though we want to leave an inheritance and a legacy to our children and grandchildren, they may not be able to handle it. So we need to think a little bit.

00:14:15 There are studies that say 85% of people who leave, I think it was over \$50,000 to their children, 85%, it's gone in a year and in almost all cases it has a negative impact on people. There's a link to the prodigal son. We don't want to focus on the prodigal son, but that's what he's saying. Be careful. You may die before you could enjoy it and what's going to happen to those you leave it to? And then the last thing in verse 21, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself." That's the I, my problem, "And is not rich towards God." So that's the first parable that he's dealing with on this theme that runs, especially through the gospel of Luke on temporal affairs. Temporal affairs impact our spirit. He knows that.

00:15:09 Now the rest of Luke chapter 12, most of it till we get to the end, he continues to talk about that. And a lot of it is a repeat of what I'm sure you talked about back in the Sermon on the Mount, the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field and you can add to your stature and seek first the kingdom of God. I'm sure you talked about all that. So I don't want to go there. Basically

the rest of those next two columns of scripture, the Savior is saying, can you just simplify and just worry about the basics? If you just worry about the basics, President Hinckley's words was, "A modest house and a basic car." If you just have the basic modest things, you don't have to be, in verse 29, "Of a doubtful mind, worried and anxious." You're going to have enough. There are more important things to seek than building better and bigger barns.

00:16:05 So if I were to pull one thing out of chapter 12, that seems to be one of the major things that he's dealing with and he's going to pick it up again in chapter 14 and He's going to pick it up again in chapter 16. He's going to pick it up in 15. It really runs through this section. Peter has a question in verse 41. He says, "Lord, are you speaking this parable to us or to all?" I mean how personal are we supposed to take this? Now He adds a little thing about knocking at the door. I mean I'd love to spend a little time on that, but we may not have time. And Jesus often doesn't answer His questions, people's questions, directly. He wants us to apply them to ourselves and the Lord says, "I want you to be faithful, wise stewards." We're going to see a parable that suggests everything that I have belongs to God anyway, so we're all stewards.

00:17:02 So what I'd like you to do, in verse 42, "Instead of accumulating, would you give?" See that word in verse 42? "Who is the wise and faithful steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing." It's a parable and a section about preparing for the second coming, preparing for the coming of Lord whenever, preparing for death whenever it comes. And when that comes, I want to be giving. Now giving the meat, I think means teachings, knowledge, truth, feed them, feed the sheep. That's a more important thing than accumulating something that you may not live to enjoy and may hurt somebody that you leave it to.

00:17:59 Give them the things that won't hurt them. Give them the meat in due season. Give them truth, give them a great legacy. The Buddha, when he left, he was wealthy, he was a prince and he left to seek enlightenment, for his wife and his child and for all mankind, he tries to find a way to end human suffering. And he spends years and he comes up with an answer. The answer is to live selflessly and in compassion. That's the key idea of Buddhism. And he comes back and his wife says to the son, "Go and ask your father for his inheritance." Maybe she's a little upset that he left, but he's seeking a solution for them too. And he says, "I have nothing to give my son as a worldly inheritance

will only cause him worries and anxiety, but I will leave him a better inheritance. I will leave him the gift of a holy life." And his son follows him and the wife, and it changes and the family reconciles himself to this search he does to try and find an answer to human suffering and dilemma.

00:19:06 So I sense that in chapter 12, "Let's give meat in due season." And when Christ comes, whether it's death, or in his own second time, he'll find us teaching primary, happy family home evening, on our mission. He'll find us giving meat in due season rather than counting how many things we have in our barn and building bigger and bigger. So that's kind of my takeaway for chapter 12.

Hank Smith: 00:19:39 I love it. Maybe the best thing we can offer our children is a spiritual inheritance and not a financial inheritance. Not maybe. I think that's what the Lord's saying here is we work so hard to give them a financial inheritance, but are we working to give them a spiritual inheritance to carry on?

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:19:55 Yeah, I think so. And there's one other thing I would do in chapter 12, just because it's so indicative and necessary for our world. If we go to verse 54, "He saith also to the people, 'When you see a cloud rise out of the west, straight away, you say there cometh a shower and so it is.'" Out of the west, off the Mediterranean, where rain comes into Israel. "When you see the south wind blow, you say there will be heat." That's coming off the desert, "And it cometh to pass." Just go to the next phrase, "Ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, why even of yourself judge ye not what is right?" I look at that and I think we have so much technology, so much knowledge, so many things we can do medically. Just last night my granddaughter and her husband were showing me ChatGT, I don't know, you probably know what I'm talking about.

John Bytheway: 00:21:00 ChatGPT.

Hank Smith: 00:21:00 It is crazy.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:21:03 This artificial intelligence and I think, what a time we live in and yet the Savior's saying, "Yeah, you know a lot. But do you discern the times that are going on? Do you understand what is right and wrong anymore?" When I look at our times, I say, well, what is the times? We are confrontational. We are judgmental, we are canceling. Everybody wants to be victims sometimes in this world. Where our times are permissive, our generation, our

baby boomer generation, we are called the me generation and then the next generation was called the me me me generation.

00:21:47 I called, just for fun, again, I'm not trying to be critical too much because we do live in a very critical time. We're just very critical and judgmental and harsh on one another and we're kind of the selfie, TikTok group now. Cameras pointed the wrong direction. I think the Savior would say, "You need to point the camera the other way." There's nothing wrong with selfies. Please don't get me wrong. I use this as a descriptive. Or we're posturing on TikTok. We're selfie-ing ourselves and there's just something about that question that has bothered me all my life. Am I discerning my time, the spirit of my time, the problems of the time? Am I losing the anchor that is, what is right, what is wrong? What is moral? What is ethical? What isn't? What is the meaning of life? What is the right way to live? How do we interact with people in our relationships?

00:22:46 And it just seems like we're not discerning the time very well. I hope I'm discerning it well. Then I don't want to get caught up in some of, everybody probably will answer that question a little bit, but I think it's a good observation of the Savior. You can do so much, but you are losing track of other things that maybe are important.

Hank Smith: 00:23:08 Just in this most recent general conference, President Nelson said, "I'm greatly concerned that so many people seem to believe that it is completely acceptable to condemn, malign and vilify anyone who does not agree with them. Many seem eager to damage another's reputation with pathetic and pithy barbs. Anger never persuades, hostility builds no one. Contention never leads to inspired solutions." He goes on, I'm sure all of our listeners have heard this talk.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:23:36 Well, I'm glad I'm in the right channel here then because that's exactly what I think he's saying about, we can do a lot, but are we discerning our time? Do you understand our time and are we losing sense of what is right and wrong? So that's the last thing in chapter 12.

00:23:52 Quickly, if we want to go to 13 and the first part of 14, maybe just one thing I thought would be a little bit on the Sabbath. Jesus heals on the Sabbath in both chapter 13, the woman with an infirmity, that's 13:11. And in 14:1, He starts healing. And sometimes I wonder if Jesus, I don't want to say he enjoyed kind of, I hate to say breaking the rules, but at least, challenging the accepted rules of the time because it seems like He does a heck of a lot of healing on Sabbath. And part of me thinks, I just

wonder if he's doing that on purpose? Because he prefers it because He wants to make a point that people are carrying things too far and that if I made a list of just some of the things He said, what could you do on the Sabbath? If we look in 13 verse 11, there's the "Woman which had a spirit of infirmity 18 years and could no wise lift up herself." Well, you can lift up people on the Sabbath. That's a good thing to do.

00:25:08 "Jesus saw her, called to her and said "Thou art loose from thine..." Well, you can loose people from infirmity on the sabbath. I'm not just talking about physical things here. I'm just trying to get some phrases to stick in my mind. To say, am I loosing? Am I lifting up? "Immediately she was made straight." Am I helping people to be made straight and to glorify God? Verse 16, "Ought not this woman whom Satan hath bound be loose from the bond? Am I loosening the adversary's bonds? Chapter 14 verse three, "Jesus spake to the Pharisees, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" To, "Pull out of the pit."

00:26:00 I just like those phrases. If I use them in terms of spiritual things, we can lift people up, are we? We can loose them, we can make them straight, we can help them glorify God, we can help to remove their bonds. We can heal, we can pull them up. I just like all those phrases and probably, the rule breaker in me kind of, maybe I'm justifying, I probably am. If I can't see a good reason for a rule, I may be willing to bend it. If not break it in bending it so much. That I have a little comfort in the fact that I think he did it on purpose. I think he was trying to make a point. Let's be a little more moderate. Let's not get too caught up in every tiny little detail of life.

00:26:51 The more rules you need, it's a sign of spiritual immaturity. More rules, the more spiritual immature I think people are. I hate to keep going to Buddhism, but it's been on my mind a lot because of where I was. The Buddha said, "There is no pathway in the sky enigmatic." But what he meant, among other things is, you don't need the pathway. You don't need the signposts and the barriers because we would say the spirit's going to tell you what to do all the time. He's just going to guide you and you're going to know what's right. So if you need a lot of rules, it's okay, but we're hoping to get you to a little higher level of spiritual maturity where you can walk in the sky without a path. So that's kind of 13. If I were going to pick something out of 13.

Hank Smith: 00:27:41 Yeah, I think if it would heal, if it would uplift, if it would get someone out of a terrible situation, if it would help someone become more God-centered, that sounds like a Sabbath day activity the Savior would approve of.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:27:57 Yeah, I like the phrases. I just like them and applying, He's talking about physical things, but everything Jesus did on a physical level, everything. All the miracles that He did for an individual was His way of saying what I'm doing for this individual I can do for everybody on a spiritual level. And we have to look at the miracles always that way saying, how does that apply to me and to my life on a spiritual level? Whether it's healing the blind or the lame or in this case, these two, walking on water, feeding the 5,000, we're going to see the raising of Lazarus here a little bit later. It's always a visual of what he will do for us spiritually. I just look at the visual and I'll get the message.

John Bytheway: 00:28:45 To give an amen to what we've just been talking about. Verse 3 and 4 of Luke 14, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" You mean he looked around, lawyers and Pharisees. Yeah, He's teaching that it's okay to do good on the Sabbath. I love this, this daughter of Abraham, 18 years and his adversaries were ashamed when he said that, he was appealing to their humanity. And so I love that. The next chapter, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? And they held their peace this time." And I guess trying to say, "Look, people are more important than this policy here that you've taken too far."

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:29:20 Yeah, that's my major takeaway from those. I mean there's lots in here. 14, we get a number of parables. The first part He gives some pretty good common sense. "If you go to a feast, take the lowest seat." Don't go up and take the seat of honor because you may embarrass yourself. So it's humble. And if you're going to make a feast, we're going to see this list in verse 13 again who he suggests you invite to the feast. "When you make a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." Those four. "And you'll be blessed because they can't recompense thee." If you invite the wealthy, they may return the favor, but you're going to do this. We're going to see those four again in the next parable. So if we pick it up in verse 16, "Then said he unto him, 'A certain man made a great supper and bade many.'"

00:30:16 Some people say the Father is the great supper or Jesus is the great supper. There's a great feast awaiting in the gospel. The Savior has a lot to feed us. He's the bread of life, out of his flows of living water. It's a great supper. He's going to give us the new wine. There's a lot of eating imagery in the New Testament and the old. So here's the great supper, and he invites many and, "And He sent His servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, 'Come for all things are now ready.' And they all with one consent, began to make excuse." Now, they're not bad

people, it's just that there're things that are more important to them than the feast that He wants to give them.

00:30:57 "The first said unto Him, 'I have bought a piece of ground.'" I got a real estate I need to handle. "I must needs go and see it. I pray that he have me excused.'" Like I said, they're not bad. They just have a little priority challenge here. You probably could go to the feast and see the piece of ground tomorrow. "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen. I go to prove them. I pray that you have me excused.'" Another said, 'I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come.'" No comment on that one. I don't know what to do with that one.

Hank Smith: 00:31:32 It sounds like a better excuse than the other ones.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:31:34 It might, yeah. In Matthew's account he says, "Some went to their merchandise." And so there are more temporal things that are preventing them from feasting. "And the servant came and showed his Lord these things and the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring hither.'" Here's our list again. So he said, we want to invite these. So here's our four, the poor and the maimed. He changes the word from lame to halt, and the blind. And the servant said, "I did it. There's enough room for more." "Now go into the highways and the hedges and urge them." Compel, unfortunately was used by the inquisition to justify forced religion. So a better word is urge. "Urge them to come in that my house may be filled, for I say to you that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

00:32:34 So here's another one about distractions. And the rich fool, he got a little distracted because he had so much and needed some space and wanted to build more. And in this one, they're busy, they're not doing bad things, it's just that there's a priority that's not in the right order and they're missing the feast. Now what's interesting about this is, Isaiah 25 talks about a feast and Doctrine and Covenants section 58 combines both Isaiah 25 and this parable and applies it to the temple. So if we wanted to get specific, we don't have to get specific. There is a general feast for all of us, of truth and goodness and spirit, love that the Savior wants us to have. He says, "I'm the bread of life." He is the feast also, sometimes. But there is a wonderful feast in the temple.

00:33:32 I mean I know I do sometimes just say, I'm just so busy, proving my oxen and looking at my piece of ground and going to my merchandise, that I just don't quite have time to feast on maybe, some of the things that would help me in the spiritual

thing. And remember I said to my soul, "Soul, we have enough." Well, but the soul says, "Well, there are some other things I'd like that maybe you aren't doing." So it's a priority issue there again. He's just trying to give us food for thought and an assessment of our life. Remember the parables are designed, not to appeal to the intellect, but to the conscience, to the will so that we learn to be better people.

- Hank Smith: 00:34:18 Mike, I would say, isn't this the parable, the sower and the weeds, too many weeds that the plant can't grow?
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:34:27 And the plant's not dead in that one. The plant dies on the shallow soil and the plant never grows on the wayside, but this plant grows. The phrase that's so powerful is, "It brings no fruit to perfection." Too much of the strength, there's fruit there, but it's just not to perfection. It's just not edible now because it didn't have enough strength to bring it to where it needed to go.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:52 Yeah, can't compete with everything else.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:34:54 Everything. Yeah. So I say it's surprising to me, when I teach this, how much in the New Testament he does talk about these issues to help us not be distracted. There are prides that come out of different things. We're warned of pride of being, of wealth. We're warned of the pride of learning, but that's not the most dangerous pride Jesus says we need to be aware of. Interesting. The most dangerous pride is the pride of righteousness. Isn't that interesting? There's a certain temptation in feeling morally superior and feeling that you're morally superior. A self-righteous, a judgmental. Again, we go back to the spirit of our times, that is very dangerous, pride and He's fairly easy on the wealthy and He's trying to warn them, but he'll really nail people for self-righteousness.
- Hank Smith: 00:35:46 Yeah, over and over.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:35:47 Yeah. I don't know why I brought that in. But anyway. He does have another priority issue here in 14. I'm going to skip 15 and come back to it because we'll go to 16 and kind of finish this theme. Verse 25 of chapter 14 says, "There went great multitudes with Him and He turned and said unto them." So a lot of people are following him and mostly, Jesus teaches what I call velvet truth. We're going to get the most velvet of all velvet truths ever in history, in chapter 15, the prodigal son. But every now and then there's a little sandpaper in His. And here's an example. He turns to the multitude following, says, "If any man comes to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and

children and brother and sisters and even his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." And I said, wow, that's pretty strong. Now he likes hyperbole. Jesus teaches with hyperbole and He teaches with figurative language. He's a very literary teacher. English majors love the gospels, okay, because they're so literarily beautiful.

00:36:56 So there is a little bit of hyperbole there. And hate here means, also could be translated to love less or to prefer over. And in the Matthew version, he doesn't say hate. He says, "If a man loves them more than me, can't be my disciple." But it's a matter of preference. He wants father, children, wives. But I think he said, there maybe come a time in your life where you may have to make a choice, a difficult choice, between me and a relationship. If you want to be my disciple, the choice will need to be me. Now the only reason I bring that up is that sometimes, people choose not to be His disciple for a lot less reasons than this very serious one that He's, like I say, He's talking in hyperbole. I don't read verse 26 literally. I think he's trying to make an emphasis.

00:37:59 But people do choose to cease being an apostle for things a lot less than mother, father, wife, children, brother, siblings. And I think this is when he says, so look, you count the cost and does a little tower parable. I want you to build a tower. Some people start, they don't finish. So make sure you understand that eventually what the cost might be, and I need to be a priority.

Hank Smith: 00:38:30 The priority, right?

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:38:31 I need to be the priority. If I am, things will probably be better with wife, children, brothers, sisters, et cetera and so forth. But it's again, one of those little more sandpaperish things. You get the tower parable there, start in 28. "Don't start building and not finish." The similar thing is in the story of the Jaredites, when the Lord says, they've built some barges and done half of their journey, and even the brother of Jared, they get on the beach and they camp for four years.

John Bytheway: 00:39:08 This is a nice situation.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:39:10 Yeah. It's nice, it's good. And the Lord says He didn't want them to stop. He doesn't want us to stop halfway. He wants to get us all the way into His kingdom. Don't take half the journey. In this case, don't build half the tower, but understand that as you build, and I'm going to give you a whole lifetime to build and I'm going to give you even after this lifetime to build. I'll give you every chance you need. But understand that, and there may be

some very difficult choices if you want to be my disciple, it's not easy. He is going to ask Peter, "Lovest thou me?" Well, He asks all of us that question all the time, and we want to be able to say, "Yes, Lord, I love you and I'm in for the whole journey and I'm not going to walk away and I'm not going to quit. Even if it costs a lot." Which verse 26 suggests it might cost you, even your own life, He's saying.

00:40:14 Verse 33, "Whosoever forsaketh not all that he has cannot be my disciple." So some fairly strong teachings there about counting the cost of discipleship. I like the tower image. I like the journey image in the Book of Mormon. We want to say to the Savior, "You have my vote. I'm here. I'm here for the long time, and if you'll be patient with me, brick by brick, I'm going to build that tower. Nothing's going to deter me from it. Nothing's going to be more important than my discipleship to you. Even relationships that are important there." I guess I think there's a little hyperbole in verse 26.

John Bytheway: 00:40:55 But I think it's following up the same idea in the, "Oh, I have oxen. I have a piece of land." Elder F. Melvin Hammond. He said, perhaps this parable could be called the, "Don't bother me now, Lord" parable.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:41:10 Right. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:41:12 We try to excuse ourselves in various ways. Each rationalization comes from selfishness and almost always relates to something temporal. For some it's the word of wisdom, for others, the law of tithing, perhaps it's a reluctance to live the law of chastity. Whatever the reason, we who reject or delay our response to the Savior's invitation show our lack of love for Him who was our king. I just like what you said at the beginning that so many of these parables are not to be taken apart intellectually, but are speaking to the conscience.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:41:43 They are. I want to come back to Luke 15 because there's probably the greatest chapter of all scripture, is the prodigal son.

00:41:51 So there is a nice pacing. I can read 12, 13 to 14 and feel a little down. Wow, my gosh. And I don't think Jesus wanted for us to feel bad. I can do it. I can find guilt. I can feel the sandpaper. I prefer the velvet. So it's almost as though, okay, I've given you some pretty tough things here. Now let me just make you feel wonderful and good. I'm going to give you this beautiful story of hope, the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the pacing that sometimes in the scriptures, the positioning of

things, carries some of the message. So if ever you want an example of, "Reproving betimes with sharpness." which means correct and the right time. Early, betimes means early, correct early with truth. Sharpness means truth and then show an increase of love. So there's been a little challenge, a little bit a challenging here and now He's going to keep His own rule. He's going to just give this, even if you waste it in riotous living, there's forgiveness.

00:43:07 But let's come back to that and finish this other. Chapter 16 has two parables. I want to focus on the second one. They both have to do with this theme of temporal things and wealth. The first is very, sometimes a difficult one. The unjust steward, I won't read through it. Most people know it. The steward is found that he's been wasteful. He's not been a very good steward and he's going to get fired. So he goes to the credit of the people that owe the debtors of his master and he says, "Look, how much do you owe?" "Well, I owe 100." "Well, write down 50." "Well, you write down 80." And he reduces them because he wants to have some friends later on who'll take care of him because he took care of them. Okay? It's a rather strange parable, I have to admit.

00:43:58 And then we go to verse eight, "The Lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely." I would probably translate that with another word.

John Bytheway: 00:44:08 Clever.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:44:09 Maybe cleverly, prudently, might be a little bit better a word. He's looking after his future. And the point of the parable is, we want to be looking after our spiritual future, as well as people look after temporal future. So if I'm trying to build my better barn, bigger barns, let's have bigger barns in heaven too. And if I'm trying to make friends here on earth, let's try and make friends in heaven. Verse nine, "I say unto you, make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness that when ye fail." Meaning when you die. "They may receive you into everlasting habitations." Use the resources and the blessings God has given with you to make heavenly friends that when life is over, you will go to an everlasting habitation. "He that is faithful in that which is least." So he considers temporal things, money and stuff, least.

00:45:19 11, "if therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" So show me you can at least handle your resources, your talents, your opportunities well, and I will give you really, the great

riches. And, "If you have not been faithful in that, which is another mans, who will give you that which is your own?" So it's consecration and everything I have belongs to him anyway, so please try and use it in the proper ways. That's what this parable is all about, is what's my 401 in heaven look like?

- John Bytheway: 00:45:55 Yeah, I appreciate this about this parable because it is a little different than a lot of them. Elder James E. Talmage in, Jesus the Christ. He said, "Be diligent for the day in which you can use your earthly riches will soon pass. Take a lesson from even the dishonest and the evil. If they are so prudent as to provide for the only future they think of, how much more should you, who believe in an eternal future, provide therefore? If you have not learned wisdom and prudence in the use of unrighteous mammon, how can you be trusted with the more enduring riches?" That one helps a lot.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:46:33 That's the principle. That's what it's saying, but it is a little difficult. It's difficult because he commended him for doing wisely, and we're thinking, wait a minute, he was dishonest. But like I say, you don't push the parables too far. You take what that's meant to say. Get your heavenly 401 loaded up and use your earthly 401 to get your heavenly 401 loaded up better.
- Hank Smith: 00:46:58 I think you're right on here, Mike. It sounds to me that the Savior's saying, look, your money's not going with you, but your relationships will. So use your money to create great relationships, if you have any.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:47:09 Let's jump to another parable, I really love, I mean the prodigal son, I think is the greatest one, and we're going to get there in just a second. But I love this parable, the second part of Luke 16. We're going to start in verse 19. When I teach this parable, I like to ask people, and as I read these first couple of verses, ask yourself, what are the differences between these two men? "There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores and desiring to be fed with the crumbs, which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores."
- 00:48:01 Now, I just stopped there and said, okay, what are the differences between the two people? I won't put you guys to the test here, but I'll get, well, one's wealthy, one's not. One's has enough to eat, one doesn't have enough to eat, one has sores and one is in good health. Their clothing is different. And then I'll say, well, they'll do all these. They get all those, and

then I'll ask, you've missed the most significant difference between the two men. So look at it again and tell me what the most significant difference is between the rich man and the beggar? And the answer is, one of them is given a name.

- Hank Smith: 00:48:50 That's what I was going to say. I should have gone for it.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:55 Tell me if I'm wrong. The only parable I can think of where Jesus gives a character in the parable a proper name, which I think we're probably going to talk about why in a minute.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:49:06 Yeah, he gives him a name, but that's not normal. It's the wealthy that have the name. I mean, you could sit and say, okay, who are the big names in the world? Now you are going to come, I'm not going to go through all the names, but people can name them. It's the unnamed masses. I just got off a three-month run of trips and I see a lot of poverty. I just see a lot of poverty, in a lot of places. I see a lot of wealth too, but a lot of poverty and a lot of beggars. A lot of people are coming up or they're trying to sell you something for a dollar or something. You can't help everybody. But I always think, whenever I see people, they have a name and God knows that name. He gave the name to the poor man.
- 00:49:58 He was a subtle teacher, Jesus sometimes and beautiful in his subtlety. This is a beautiful thing if we catch it. That it's the poor man that gets the name and he's the one that becomes personalized. The other one is just another rich man.
- John Bytheway: 00:50:16 Yeah, a certain rich man.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:50:18 But it's the opposite in the way we look at the world. Now, he's going to carry this on, the English major's coming out of me here now because I really like good writing. I really like good storytelling. So I'm going to read the next verse. Now, I'm going to read it in the tone. The tone of scripture is important to get sometimes. I'll read it in an obvious tone so you get it. So now I'm going to go to verse 22, "And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried." And can you see what he's doing there? Again, it's the reversal. It's the flip. It's the wealthy who get the eloquent description, the big funerals, the eulogies, the write-ups, and it's the poor that this just are died and are buried, just died and buried. I think that he's doing this on, is part of the power and the wonder of the parable. That we take notice. They have names. You just don't bury them. You just don't. But that's kind of what we do.

00:51:34 I was at the killing field just about 10 days ago and graves with 1000s in them, and they have a big memorial in one of them by Phnom Penh, and this was from the Khmer Rouge in 1975, 1979, when almost 2 million were killed. And you can see as you come up to the memorial, the skulls of all that they've pulled out in this memorial, and I just cried. It was so overwhelming. I didn't realize I was going to be affected as much as I was.

00:52:10 And I thought about this as I was walking in there, saying he knew every name of every Lazarus that died there. I could hear their cries. I could feel their fear, their bewilderment, the astonishment of what was happening to them, and it was comforting to know, He knew every one. He knew all their names, and that people are carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. We could end right there. I love that part. There's one other little thing that I really like, at least in terms of how well-crafted this is, "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, 'Father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'"

00:53:15 Okay, this is again, literal imagery, but how much water would be on the tip of your finger if you dipped it in water? How much water?

Hank Smith: 00:53:27 Maybe a drop or two.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:53:28 A drop. Now what word in verse 21 matches drop?

Hank Smith: 00:53:36 He just wanted crumbs.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:53:37 He just wanted crumbs. See, so you get that, again, it's just such a well written, beautiful, crafted story.

Hank Smith: 00:53:46 Your situation has been reversed.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:53:48 It's been reversed. The tip of the water, the drop, versus the crumb, the name versus not the name, the eloquent burial versus, just died and buried.

Hank Smith: 00:54:00 Sounds like Lazarus could see the rich man from where he was, and now the rich man can see Lazarus from where he is.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:54:06 Yeah. Now we tend to, just a very quick comment, maybe on the last part, we won't go into again, detail here. We tend to doctrinalize this last part. I'm always cautious about

doctrinalizing parables because again, I think they aren't written to the intellect, they're written to the conscience. So Abraham said, remember in your lifetime you had good things and he had evil things, so now he's comforting your torment. It's kind of opposite. I think 26 might be said with a little ironic tone, "Beside all this, between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed so that they, which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

00:54:55 Like I say, we tend to doctrine that. I don't mind doctrinalizing that there is barriers in the spirit world, but I don't think that's what he's trying to teach here. I would say since he's talking about financial wealth, rich, poor, I would look at that and say, wealth does create great gulfs between people, where you can't cross over, class structure and status. I use this example when I moved to Salt Lake, I'd never lived in Utah before, I moved to Salt Lake 35 or so years ago, trying to find a house, and I can't tell you how many people gave me advice on different places in the valley to buy a house. And it didn't take me very long to realize that, in the Salt Lake Valley, there was a great Gulf fixed. It was called I15. I'm saying this, I'm glad you're laughing because, but it is just so true and different comments people would say about those two sides.

Hank Smith: 00:56:08 You don't want to live over there-

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:56:10 That's right. Or here, there. This is where the proud people are. Well, we're humble here. We don't want to go over there. But when you're buying a house, location, location, location, I understand that. But there was a certain gulf that was fixed. I mean, you can't read English novels and not see class structure in that. There are gulfs fixed in these things. I lived in a small Mormon town in Canada. There, the Gulf was those who lived on the hill and those who lived on the river bottoms. There's just some gulfs. I like to think that Verse 26 is stated with a little bit of an ironic tone about gulfs being fixed, and it's not really a doctrinal statement about the hereafter. And then he says, well, he is changing the rich man. Send somebody to my father's house. I have five brothers. I don't want them-

Hank Smith: 00:57:04 To end up like me.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:57:06 Like me, which is good. He's learning. And Abraham says, "Well, they have the scriptures and they can listen to them." And he says, well, "But they won't." But if somebody came back from the dead, they would. And then Jesus makes I think, a reference to himself, "If they can't be persuaded by the prophets, even if I rise from the dead, they're not going to be persuaded." And you

do have, I think a specific reference in verse 31 to His own, but it's also one that if the scriptures can't change you, then probably nothing is going to change you.

- John Bytheway: 00:57:36 Or that Lazarus, a real Lazarus is going to rise from the dead
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:57:42 Or a real Lazarus, which is we've got this week too.
- John Bytheway: 00:57:46 Hey, can I ask you a question? The English major in you? I absolutely love a Christmas Carol and the Charles Dickens story, and I've wondered if by some chance, he got this idea from verse 28, of Jacob Marley coming to Ebenezer Scrooge and warning him about this place?
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:58:07 Well, you can certainly make that connection, whether he got it or not from that, you can certainly make the connection.
- John Bytheway: 00:58:14 I wondered if you knew, I just think it's interesting.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:58:17 I don't, England in the 1800s, one of the ways they celebrated Christmas, was to tell ghost stories. So it's kind of natural that he would tell a ghost story. But did he get this idea of sending somebody back? Be nice, wouldn't it? We'd love to think, I'm sure Dickens knew his New Testament, and whether he did or not, the match works, but I don't know that that's where he got it.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:43 One thing I noticed from this parable is this great gulf between them seems to be created by the rich man himself. Even in verse 24, he says, "Father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus." He still sees Lazarus as less than him. He's a servant. "Send Lazarus." And by the way, we learned that the rich man knew who Lazarus was. He calls him by name right there.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:59:07 He calls him by name. Yeah, that's right. Yeah, he does. The naming of the beggar is the most significant part of the parable. I think it's the one point we want to get, above all, that they have names.
- Hank Smith: 00:59:20 "If you didn't give crumbs away while you were on earth, you're not going to get many drops in the next life." I ask my students when I read this, what would you give away if you knew the only thing you'd have in heaven are the things you gave away?
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:59:33 That's a good way to ask it.

Hank Smith: 00:59:34 They'd have a lot of gum, a lot of cookies, a lot of old clothes and old stuffed animals. So we've had a good time with that. But I like the question, what would you do?

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:59:44 Well, let's go back to Luke 15 and kind of change the subject a little bit. You see that theme flowing through there?

Hank Smith: 00:59:52 I got to tell you both, Mike, I can barely keep these pages in my scriptures. These are the two that-

John Bytheway: 00:59:57 You worn them out?

Hank Smith: 00:59:58 Use so much that they're worn out. Yeah, they're hanging on by a thread. I don't know how yours can handle it, Mike.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 01:00:06 Yeah, mine are scotch tape. It's a beautiful chapter. I don't think there's anything in chapter 15 that isn't just pure velvet. It's given to two main audiences. Sometimes it's helpful to know the audience. I don't think one of the main audiences in verse two is the Pharisees and the Scribes, in terms of audiences who read it and bring it. Sometimes we think that the older brothers kind of matches the Pharisees and the sinners match the prodigal.

01:00:41 The main audience is in verse one, "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him." That's who he's giving the prodigal son to. To those people who need to know. I just love, I never get through this. For those people who need to know that there is a robe and a ring and shoes and an embrace and a kiss waiting for them. No matter what they've done, no matter where they've been, the robe, the ring and the shoes are sitting there waiting for them. That's the main audience, the sinners he's telling us for. Because we're going to find out that the prodigal doesn't feel worthy. And often, that's the way people feel. People just don't feel worthy.

01:01:40 Sometimes when I teach this, I can tell by the comments of people, who they think they are in the parable. You can read the parable in three different viewpoints. The viewpoint, some people think, "I'm the prodigal." Some people think, "I'm the older brother." And they get a little upset sometimes, or at least they make comments that wonder, "Well, but he's not going to be equal to the other one who never sinned." And I say, "Well, you say that because you think that's who you are in the parable."

- 01:02:13 The best viewpoint to read it from, is from the father's viewpoint. Okay? That's the best viewpoint. So the main audience is those who need forgiveness and need to know that the robe and the ring and the shoes are there and that you don't come back as a servant, you come back as a son. The other main audience is for, and there are lots of them in the church today, for parents of children who have gone into far countries, and far countries can be a lot of different things. So those are the two audiences.
- 01:02:57 There is another audience that he's addressing to, let's not be threatened by the prodigal that returns home. One of the most beloved characters in the Book of Mormon, is the prodigal son named Alma the Younger. So let's not be threatened by them coming. It's just a beautiful story for any parent. The most beautiful story ever told is for people who need to know they can come back and for the parents of those people. And that's who I think he's given it to.
- 01:03:35 It's the only parable that has too many parables introducing it. So we start with verse four, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep if you lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that, which is lost, until he find it?" We never give up on these people, never. "And when he had found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calls together his friend." Some joy needs to be shared, "And neighbors, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me.'" This is Jesus at his inviting best, he's saying to the Pharisees and the scribes who are murmuring, that you're eating with sinners, be happy with me, look at, they're listening, they're coming. This is a cause for rejoice. Don't condemn them. Rejoice with me.
- 01:04:24 "I have found my sheep, which was lost, and I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repentance more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." I don't like to read anything in Luke 15 negatively. I don't think that that's an ironic statement that, well, you are the 99 out there. Don't think you need repentance because the 99 are going to match the older son and he loves the older son. Like I said, there's nothing negative for me in this.
- 01:04:58 There are two kinds of joy, though. There is the intensity of joy over the one, and there is the constancy of joy over the ninety and nine. And there are different kinds of joy. But I don't think God loved Alma the Younger more than Nephi. But there's a different feel to it. And that's the only way I can describe it. That

there's an intensity of joy of the prodigal and there's a constancy of joy over the ninety and nine and the older brother.

Hank Smith:

01:05:40

Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:00	Welcome to part two with Dr. S. Michael Wilcox. Luke chapters 12 through 17 and John chapter 11.
Dr. Michael Wilcox:	00:00:07	Now that was a parable for men, and so now we've got to have one for women. We want everybody to relate to this thing. So now we go to the women, verse eight. "What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" Again, you don't ever give up.
	00:00:30	"And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying ... " Again, he's inviting the critics. Like I say, this is a world of a lot of critics, who even when people repent sometimes, they say, "Yeah. Well, but he made this mistake." I think you've heard me say it. When I look at people in history, wherever, celebrate all the good and forgive everything else. That's just the way we all ought to live.
	00:00:59	So, "Rejoice with me; I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents."
	00:01:09	Now he's set up the story. The proper response is joy, and the prodigal needs to know there's going to be joy, not an interrogation, not a trial period. Let's see if you learn anything out there eating with the pigs, rejoicing.
	00:01:27	We get that little financial fang here, the two sons. "And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.' And he divided unto them his living."
	00:01:40	I don't like to criticize anything, but if I'm going to try and pull a financial point out of it, once again, it may not always be wise to give a lot of money to somebody who can't handle it. That's not the purpose of the parable, so we'll just leave it at that.
	00:01:54	"Not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his

substance with riotous living." There's a lot of different far countries. I love the phrase. A far country's far from home. There's a lot of people who are in different kinds of far countries. They're not all wasting their substance. They're not all doing riotous living. But there's a lot of parents who have children, for one reason or another, don't feel welcome or don't feel at home, or want to go out and see something else.

00:02:30 My mother went to a far country. She was young, 20s. That seems to be a time people want to leave. She left the church. She went to San Francisco. That was her far country. There she checked out what was in the great and spacious building for a while and eventually came home. Thank God she came home or where would I be?

00:02:54 So there's lots of far countries. Everybody knows what far country they're in and every parent knows what far country. Now what happens to you in the far countries?

Hank Smith: 00:03:04 I was going to say, from verse 13, it sounds like he has no intention of coming back, if you take everything. He gathered all together. It's not like he's left a box, saying, "Oh, of course I'll come back for this someday." He has no intention of coming back.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:03:18 I think you're correct in that. Yeah. Well, what happens in the far country? Well, you spend everything. Good satanic style, good worldly style, good far country style is often to take everything and give nothing in return.

Hank Smith: 00:03:37 Mike, it reminds me of when you taught the Book of Revelation. Everything's for sale.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:03:41 Everything's for sale.

Hank Smith: 00:03:42 Everything's for sale.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:03:43 Even the soul. That's right. "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want." There's different kinds of wants in far countries. You can want love, companionship, health, faith, testimony, things that you used to believe in and don't anymore. There's lots of wants. We could spend hours just talking about some of these verses.

00:04:06 "He began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed

swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

- 00:04:08 He began to be in want and he joined himself to a citizen of that country and he sent him into the fields to feed swine," which would've been horrible for a Jew. "And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." That's the last part of the style. You spend all and give nothing in return, because sometimes the world wants a lot from you, and once they've got it, they don't give anything back.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:36 The riotous living sounds like he had people around him, yet he's left with no friends, nowhere to go.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:04:42 He's got the pigs, and sometimes people need to spend a little time with the pigs. Alma the Younger had to have an angel shake the earth. Sometimes tough things have to happen.
- 00:04:56 But I love the first line of verse 17, when he came to himself. That's a beautiful phrase. His real self. His real self wasn't the inhabitant of the far country. His real self was not the product. His real self is the son of the father. Your real self is you at your best. I truly believe that. We're going to see that dramatically in John 11, if we ever get there. We'll get there.
- Hank Smith: 00:05:27 We'll get there.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:05:28 We'll see that. Just remember that when he came to himself, how much ... We're going to see two people in John 11, the real self that sometimes aren't seen. "When he came to himself," his best self, "he said ... " Now at this point I'd like to say the power of this parable, of all parables but certainly this one, is that you feel repentance, so you can do it. You feel forgiveness. Very few people feel like repenting when somebody gives a lesson on the five steps of repentance.
- 00:06:05 I mean I'm being a little sarcastic. I don't mean to be too sarcastic. I'm just ... Jesus is teaching in parables to elicit an emotion. See, He's trying to say rejoice ... Feel it. Feel repentance, feel forgiveness, and then you'll be able to do it, because you feel it vicariously through this story, which is what great literature does. So, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"
- Hank Smith: 00:06:34 Even his employees have enough, right?

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:06:36 Yeah. "I will arise and go to my father. I will say unto him ... " These are poignant words that people who've been to far countries and want to come home often feel.

Hank Smith: 00:06:50 Yeah. I've done too much.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:06:51 "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." "I'm not a son. I'm not worthy. I've done too much."

00:07:10 I think a lot of the work in the spirit world, I know we talk about missionary work in the spirit world, is to convince a lot of people that they still have hope even though they blew life, that they are still sons.

00:07:26 This parable asks the question, when you return, do you return as a servant or a son? Sometimes people say, "I'm not worthy to be a son anymore because I didn't sin like my older brother." "I am no more worthy to be called a son. Make me as one of the hired servants."

00:07:44 Then one of the most beautiful verses in all literature: "And he arose," I'm sorry, "and came to his father." Now who is that father? That is our Father in heaven, Father. "He arose and came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

00:08:22 He doesn't wait for him to come. He doesn't even know if he's coming back. Maybe he's coming back for more money. His son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Notice what phrase does he drop.

John Bytheway: 00:08:42 Hired servant. Make me a hired servant.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:08:45 He drops that because he's obviously being greeted as a son. There are no hired servants in God's kingdom. Only sons, only daughters.

Hank Smith: 00:08:54 It's almost as if the father interrupts him. He's got this speech prepared and he's like, "I am not ... " Then he says, "Get that thought out of your mind."

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:09:02 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his

feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." Again, beautiful words. They're so beautiful they're going to be repeated.

- 00:09:19      ""For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to be merry." This my son. Now you could end it right there-
- John Bytheway:      00:09:41      Yup.
- Hank Smith:      00:09:41      Yeah.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox:      00:09:44      ... because it's just so powerful. All people ... And we're all prodigals in our own way; there aren't very many older brothers, there are some ... all need to know there is, at least with your Father in heaven ... Maybe earthly parents are not going to be able to do it quite as well. But at least with their Father in heaven, the robe, the ring, and the shoes, the kiss and the embrace, are waiting. He'll run to give it to you. That's our Father in heaven.
- Hank Smith:      00:10:18      I've often wondered if he says a ring, robe, and shoes, because these are all fitted blessings. Robe is not one size fit all. Ring is not one size fit all. Shoes are not one size fit all. I wonder if he's saying, "I planned on you coming home and I have your size. I've already got it ready."
- Dr. Michael Wilcox:      00:10:35      Yeah, and they may have been his own.
- Hank Smith:      00:10:36      Yeah, that he left behind.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox:      00:10:39      "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, 'Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.' And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him."
- 00:11:02      The father goes to both sons. He goes to both. The prodigal has his problem and the older brother has his problem, and the father goes to both. He goes out to them.
- Hank Smith:      00:11:15      Mike, it seems this parable could be misnamed. It's called The Parable of the Prodigal Son. The only character that's in both sides of this is the father, the good father.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:11:25 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:11:26 Or the prodigal sons.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:11:28 The prodigal sons.

John Bytheway: 00:11:30 Yeah.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:11:31 "He intreated him. He answering and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.'" I take that at face value. This is a Nephi person, at least in his life. "'And yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this thy son,'" not my brother-

Hank Smith: 00:11:52 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:11:52 Nice. Nice.

Hank Smith: 00:11:52 Your child.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:11:53 "'This son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.'" Then these beautiful words again. "And he said unto him, 'Son, thou art ever with me.'" You are always in my heart. You have your problems, but I love you.

00:12:18 I like Tyndale's 1526 translation of it. He changes the verb tense. He wrote, "Son, thou wast ever with me." "You have always been here. You didn't eat with the swine. Either way, don't be threatened. You are in my heart and all that I have is thine."

00:12:42 Then Tyndale, who translates this ... The rhythm of verse 32 is really good rhythm. "It was meet that we should make merry." Look at the alliteration there, meet, make, merry. And be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. That's why it's such a magical phrase and has such power.

00:13:13 "'We had to. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.'" There's a rhythm even in the syllables. I don't want to teach an English lesson here, but, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad," is 12 syllables. If you make four, the fulcrum that balances the phrase, that, "This thy brother was dead and is alive again," is 12. 12, 12, and then

three, three, "And was lost, and is found." The rhythm of it is what makes the magic of it.

00:13:42 I remember a friend of mine telling me about their son had run off. He had problems in drugs and different things and he went off to his far country. They didn't know where he was for the longest time. I don't know if maybe I've shared this on another time before. They didn't know where he was for the longest time.

00:14:05 One day he was up in the canyons over an open fire, he was homeless, and heating a can of beans on an open fire. That was a Sunday. He knew that every Sunday his mother would fix a big special meal and all the family would all be there. He's sitting there on his own. He is in his own pigsty there. He knows what's at home and he knows his mother and his family.

00:14:46 Just the memory of Sunday dinner with the family is enough. He stamps out the fire and walks home, opens the door. There's the seat that he used to sit out at the table. He sat down at the table, welcomed back with love, given the robe, the ring, the shoes, the embrace, the kiss.

00:15:11 You just don't get truth more velvet, softer, more beautiful, more hopeful for parents who have children in a far country, or for people who are in a far country, and feel they're not worthy to come, or for even older brothers who maybe feel a little bit threatened and also have to be reassured, "Thou art ever with me. You are always in my heart. I don't love him more than I love you. My love for him is an intensity of love. My love for you is a constancy of love, and they are different qualities."

John Bytheway: 00:15:49 Beautiful.

Hank Smith: 00:15:50 There's a talk from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland way back in 2002 called The Other Prodigal. I encourage all of our listeners to go and read and listen to the whole thing. But he does talk about this older brother.

00:16:04 He says, "This son is not so much angry that the other has come home as he is angry that his parents are so happy about it. Feeling unappreciated and perhaps more than a little self-pity, this dutiful son, and he is wonderfully dutiful, forgets for a moment that he has never had to know filth or despair, fear or self-loathing. He forgets for a moment that every calf on the ranch is already his, and so are all the robes in the closet and

every ring in the drawer. He forgets for a moment that his faithfulness has been and always will be rewarded.

00:16:38 No, he who has virtually everything and who has in his hardworking, wonderful way earned it lacks the one thing that might make him the complete man of the Lord he nearly is. He has yet to come to the compassion and mercy, the charitable breadth of vision to see this is not a rival returning. It is his brother. As his father pled with him to see it is one who was dead and now is alive. It is one who is lost and now is found."

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:17:05 That's exactly it. You can add just a little postscript, a little exclamation point on that, if we go to chapter 17. These are beautiful verses. These are two brothers.

00:17:19 So now I go to verse three of chapter 17. "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him," correct him. Rebuke gives too much permission. I think correct might be a good one. "If he repent, forgive him."

00:17:38 Then verse four, "If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

00:17:52 Now I don't think God expects a higher standard of us than He Himself will give. I could say it humorously, I guess I get seven sins a day. I get seven mistakes. I get to show my humanity and weakness seven times a day, and as long as I sincerely and truly...

00:18:13 Some would say, well, repentance is not doing it again. I would say, yes, that's the technical description of it, but maybe the seven times 70 sins is the same sin done over and over again that somebody's fighting all his life to try and overcome, and is sincerely sorry.

00:18:31 We forgive seven times a day. We worship a God who is so merciful, so forgiving. He's a seven times a day. He's a 10,000-talent forgiver, a 500-pence forgiver. He's a scarlet to snow white forgiver. He's as far as the east is to the west forgiver. Sometimes I need seven times a day in my life.

Hank Smith: 00:19:01 I cross-referenced our prodigal son and what you've mentioned here in 17 to Genesis 50. When Jacob dies, the brothers don't believe they're truly forgiven. So they say to Joseph, again, "Forgive us please," and Joseph weeps when they speak unto him. His brethren said, "We will be thy servants." Joseph said,

"Fear not. Am I in the place of God? As for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good to bring to pass as it is this day to save much people alive. Fear you not, I will nourish you," and he comforted them. Just a beautiful moment.

- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:19:41 Same thing.
- Hank Smith: 00:19:42 Am I really forgiven?
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:19:45 No servants in the kingdom, only brothers. No servants in the kingdom, only sons. That's just the way it is. If I need it seven times a day, I'd get it. If I need the 10,000, I'd get it, even if I feel unworthy. And often people do. People often feel unworthy.
- John Bytheway: 00:20:03 I have in my ward a man who is at the prison every week. That's his calling. I've been out there with him before. I'll tell you, I learned something, that the prison could be called a far country. I got up to speak and I saw the countenance of, I don't know, 40, 50 guys was, "Give me everything you've got." One of them said, "This is the best day every week. I look forward to this."
- 00:20:41 I didn't see that same kind of fill up my cup as a bishop. It just taught me it's not about distance, it's about direction. You're in prison, but are you coming or going? They were coming. You're in church, but are you coming or going?
- 00:21:00 It's not distance. There are lots of far countries. It's about direction and which way you're trying to come. I'll tell you that was life-changing to see how much they wanted everything that they could get each time they came to a family home-
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:21:18 Church service, yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:21:19 ... even in prison, trying to come back. I loved what you've said. It reminds me of Section 64 in the Doctrine of Covenants. Just five words I underlined. "I the Lord forgive sins." That's what I do.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:33 John, that is actually the section of the Doctrine of Covenants that Mike was with us. So we would encourage everybody to go back and listen to that episode. I brought up Joseph of Egypt. Mike was with us for that episode as well on Joseph of Egypt. So, Mike, all of your episodes with us have a beautiful thread running through them.
- Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:21:53 I say eastern religions, the great problem in eastern religions is suffering.

Hank Smith: 00:22:00 Yeah, not sin.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:22:02 Not sin. The answer that the Buddha gives in others is selflessness and compassion. The great problem in western religions is sin, and the answer that Jesus gives in others is mercy and forgiveness. It's a theme that comes up a lot, because we need it. We need it for ourselves. We need to bestow it. As Shakespeare said, you're twice blessed. Forgiveness, mercy is twice blessed. Blessed is the one who gives it and the one who receives it.

John Bytheway: 00:22:33 Wow. Yeah.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:22:35 Well, we have one wonderful little story, again, I love, the 10 lepers. That's in chapter 17. We started in verse 12. "And as he entered into a certain village, there met him 10 men that were lepers, which stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, 'Go show yourselves unto the priests.' And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed."

00:23:04 "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, 'Were there not 10 cleansed? But where are the nine?' There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. 19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

00:23:31 So that's the simple little story about gratitude. I sometimes wonder if the one who came back came back because he was the least one to expect mercy from the Jewish rabbi. I mean think about the woman at the well, a Samaritan. She surprised Jesus. He even talks to her. Think of some of the things that James and John, ready to call fire down on the Samaritan village.

00:24:01 There are some pretty deep prejudices between these people. Maybe of all the people who least expected mercy from Jesus was this one.

00:24:12 We learn a little bit of a lesson in life. When you expect a lot, which we do in this nation and a lot of our lives, when we expect a lot and don't get it, we can get bitter and disappointed and angry because we feel somewhat entitled. If we expect a lot and get it, it can create pride. We want to go build our better barns because we earned it and we deserved it and we worked.

It's when you don't expect something and get it that the gratitude goes deep.

00:24:41 One of the great solutions to the problem we talked about earlier, the wealth and thing ... Is gratitude. You can't feel pride and gratitude at the same time in your heart. You want to kill pride, you kill it with gratitude.

00:24:54 When I was young, I didn't feel very good at anything. It's junior high school, which I know you've heard me say I think junior high was invented in hell by Lucifer.

Hank Smith: 00:25:05 It's just a bad idea, really.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:25:07 Yeah, I just didn't feel good in anything. I had my mother ... I wasn't good at sports. I could get good grades, I was a good student, but I didn't count in the social sporty of teenage life. In fact, it could go against you that you were a smart guy getting A's.

00:25:28 I told my mother I didn't think I was very good at anything and she told me a story about another boy in the stake who went to his mother and said to her, "I'm not good at anything." I knew this boy. He's a little younger than me. His mother said, "I want you to think and you come back to me. I want you to think and come back and tell me one thing you are good at."

00:25:53 And so, he thought and he came back later and he said to his mother two words: "I'm honest." She said, "Don't you think it's better to be good at being honest than hitting a baseball?" which was the big sport at the time we all wanted to be good at.

00:26:11 My mother's telling me this story. So I'm thinking in my life, I mean what do I want to be good at? I decided I wanted to be good at gratitude. Now maybe I chose an easier one. I just never wanted to be one of the nine. That was it. I always wanted to be the one, not only to God to be grateful but to people. If I could gain perfection in something on earth, maybe I could do one, that I could learn to be grateful. Every now and then God takes me on a little journey to remind me of that commitment.

00:26:52 When I was a missionary in the mission field, France, maybe the check didn't come and I sat down for dinner. I had a bowl of yogurt. Plain yogurt, no fruit in the bottom. Just plain French yogurt. I remember saying a prayer on it, "Father in heaven, thank you for this yogurt. Please bless it. In the name of Jesus

Christ, amen." Sometimes the ending of a prayer can be one word. But I didn't feel really grateful.

- 00:27:19 And so, the Lord took me on a little visual journey in my imagination. From time-to-time in my life He does this with me. The first stop that we went to was ... It's different stops, different times. The first stop on the journey is always some beautiful place in nature, different places. But on this particular time, He took me to the beach off Southern California where I grew up. The sun is setting in all those beautiful colors, reds and corals and pinks and orange. You can hear the gulls cry, feel the sea breezes, smell the salt air, that wonderful feeling of bare feet on sand. The Lord says, "With your bowl of yogurt, Mike, I give you all the beauty of the world."
- 00:28:18 Then we'd go to a place of poverty. Like I say, I've seen a lot of them. One of the first ones that I ever saw was a man sleeping in a street when I was a little boy, covered by newspapers, and asking my mother what was the matter with that man and her telling me that he had no place to live. I mean I've seen a lot of poverty. The Lord says, "I've never known a day of hunger, have you? I've never known a day of insecurity." The Lord says, "With your bowl of yogurt, I give you security and freedom from want."
- 00:29:05 Then I was in France, then we ... Again, different places, different journeys ... go to Normandy. You walk on that beach and you go to those crosses, that cemetery where young men gave their lives. When we say young men give their lives for their country, and young women, it doesn't mean their breath and heartbeat. It means their life. They gave their life. They're never going to hold a wife in their arms or hear a child say daddy or a child say grandpa. You give a whole life. The Lord says, "With your bowl of yogurt, I give you freedom and independence paid for by the sacrifice of thousands."
- 00:29:54 Then we go to Carthage, to that stone building. I look up the window where Joseph Smith fell out. The Lord says, "With your bowl of yogurt, I give you goodness and truths to give you stability in life and a frame."
- 00:30:21 Then I go to South Pass, Wyoming and I watch those handcart pioneers pulling up that pass in the snow. The Lord says, "With your bowl of yogurt, I give you a heritage built on the sacrifices of thousands who came to give you your BYUs and your churches and temples and institutes and houses in warm valleys." I start to get pretty humble about this time.

- 00:30:50 Next we go to my grandfather's house, or my mother. I hear that magical sound the three of us all love, that butterfly wing sound of scriptures turning. I hear my grandfather tell me a story, or my mother, and the Lord says, "With your bowl of yogurt, I give you wisdom, wisdom of the ages, of the finest men and women who ever lived, to guide your life through their experiences."
- 00:31:28 Then we go to a temple, an altar, and I look across at that young woman, Laurie. I hear those wonderful words, and the Lord says, "With your bowl of yogurt, I give you eternal love and all its promises."
- 00:31:50 Now you can imagine the last spot we go. I go to other places, but the last spot is always Gethsemane, always, and the Garden Tomb. I see Jesus kneel and offer that prayer and I see the hope and the new beginning of life that we'll talk about in chapter 11, because it's a prelude to it.
- 00:32:18 The Lord says, "With your bowl of yogurt, I give you beauty and mercy and forgiveness and holiness and sanctity and devotion. I give you my son. What more can I give you to make you happy?" I say, "Father in heaven, if you don't mind, I'd like to bless the bowl of yogurt again."
- 00:32:50 Now I've been on that journey a lot. Sometimes it's not when I'm ungrateful and I need it. It's just good to go on it sometimes. It's especially good to go on it when, as we looked at earlier, we aren't discerning the spirit of our age and we just need a little gratitude to help us with the spirit of our age and understand what this gospel of this church is really all about, and the goal and where we're trying to take.
- 00:33:30 We never want to be one of the nine. We always want to be that one who turns back maybe because he got more in life than you ever expected. I can't think of anybody on earth more blessed than me, just can't think of it. Maybe you don't have troubles and problems, but I just can't think of anybody who's been given more with his bowl of yogurt than I've been given. That's what I think Luke 17 is all about, that gratitude.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:09 I'm sure you both remember Elder David B. Haight. Whenever I mentioned that name to my students, they don't know who that is. I feel bad for them because that was a bright spot in general conference was having Elder Haight get up and talk about he and his wife Ruby.

00:34:24 He gave a talk in October of 2002 called Were There Not 10 Cleansed?, in which he says it's so easy in life for us to receive blessings, many of them almost uncounted, and have things happen in our lives that can help change our lives, improve our lives, and bring the spirit into our lives. But we sometimes take them for granted. How grateful we should be for the blessings that the gospel of Jesus Christ brings into our hearts and souls.

00:34:50 I would remind you all, if we're ever going to show gratitude properly to our heavenly Father, we should do it with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength, because it was he who gave us life and breath. As that gratitude is magnified and developed and expanded, which is what I think you've shown us here, Mike, you can magnify, develop, and expand your gratitude, it can bless our hearts and our minds and our souls to where we'd like to continue to carry on and do those things that we are asked to do. Just an excellent talk from a great soul.

John Bytheway: 00:35:22 Elder Merrill J. Bateman, who was president of BYU for a while, he made an observation I'd never noticed about this. He said nine were cleansed, but only one was made whole. The difference there being the gratitude and-

Hank Smith: 00:35:36 Gratitude expressed.

John Bytheway: 00:35:38 Yeah. What was the thing that you said? A cure for pride is gratitude? Because I've always felt like gratitude and humility go together, because you realize I have a lot of undeserved blessings and they fit together. But I like the way you said that, and that the one who turned and gave thanks was made whole, not just cleansed but made whole.

Hank Smith: 00:36:03 I think it's important to notice too that I bet the other nine felt grateful.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:36:08 I'm sure they did.

Hank Smith: 00:36:09 But this one came back and expressed it.

John Bytheway: 00:36:12 Another just sequence thing that I love about this is and it came to pass that as they just stood there, no, as they went, they started making tracks. You don't show yourselves to the priest until you are healed. They weren't healed yet, but as they went, they were cleansed. I think Elder Bednar talks about, yeah, the feet getting wet before the water parted in the Jordan, that "as they went" aspect.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:36:39 Some of the most beloved stories in my heart in the New Testament you gave me in Luke, The Prodigal Son and The 10 Lepers. If we'd gone on another chapter, we would have gotten Zacchaeus and the tree. Then I'd have my top three. Well, let's go to chapter 11.

John Bytheway: 00:36:59 They're unique to Luke, aren't they? They're not in the other gospels. I think that's interesting.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:37:05 Yeah. Prodigal Son, 10 Lepers, and Zacchaeus. Luke is my favorite gospel. I mean if we can have one ... Maybe we shouldn't. I love them all. They all have things. But Luke is great.

00:37:19 If we go to John 11, I'll just show you, since we're on gratitude, sometimes you learn a lot just by listening to Jesus pray. I go through the New Testament in different ways. Sometimes I go through saying, "Give me Jesus' eyes and let me see as He sees." Then I look at all that He beholds, how He looked at people to try and learn how He looked at people, how He listened to people, how did He pray, and just read all His prayers.

00:37:46 Look at his prayer in verse 41 and 42, just before He raises Lazarus from the dead. It's a beautiful little prayer. I'm just going to do the two first phrases. "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always:."

00:38:09 That's a magnificent prayer. Sometimes the answer to our prayers is simply the acknowledgement and understanding that God has heard us. That's all I need. I just need to know that He heard me and I know that He hears me always.

00:38:27 Well, there's a couple of points that I love in this. This is the raising of Lazarus. This is the miracle that is going to set the stage for the resurrection. This is where, again, He says, "What I've done for one, I will do for all. I heal all blindness, make all people whole. I will bring you back to life."

00:38:48 Remember in The Prodigal Son, we looked at when he came to himself, his real self. So now I like to ask people this. Jesus was what I call a lifter. He lifted people. He was just a lifter. One of the ways He lifted people was by giving them a nickname. Peter is a nickname, The Rock, Sons of Thunder are nicknames, James and John. John was the beloved. He was just a lifter.

00:39:16 He lifts Zacchaeus in the tree. He's always lifting. He's trying to help people feel good about themselves. We're not a lifter society. That's part of discerning the times. We're a putdown

society, a critique society. We're not a lifter society always. But He was a lifter.

00:39:33 There is an apostle who does have a nickname that Jesus didn't give him. We gave it to him. What apostle is that?

John Bytheway: 00:39:42 Thomas.

Hank Smith: 00:39:43 Doubting Thomas.

John Bytheway: 00:39:44 Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:39:44 That's Doubting Thomas. Poor old Thomas. We remember him at his worst moment.

John Bytheway: 00:39:48 Yeah, that's terrible.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:39:50 There's a woman that we usually think about at one of ... I think it's because we misinterpret her story, the dinner at Bethany. Who gets the short end of the PR relationship in the dinner at Bethany story between Mary and Martha?

Hank Smith: 00:40:07 Martha, yeah.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:40:08 Poor old peevish Martha complaining to Jesus. Now I think the paintings all have that wrong. I think there were probably a lot of people there. That's not an intimate little tete-a-tete, Jesus and the two sisters. Somebody's going to finally paint that story correctly.

00:40:25 So let's look at Thomas and Martha here in chapter 11. So as Jesus in chapter 11 has gone across the Jordan River into what was another jurisdiction in the Roman Empire at the time, the Jordan River becomes a barrier. He's safer over there. The last time He'd been in Jerusalem, they had tried to stone Him. So He would let things cool off from time to time, not that He's ever afraid of anything. But He leaves.

00:40:57 He's over across the Jordan River in present day Jordan, and Mary and Martha send Him word that their brother Lazarus is sick. That's the setting of this story. They give Him a pretty strong hint in the letter, or the messenger, verse three, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." That's a pretty strong hint.

00:41:19 Now we're told in verse five, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." They are the center of calm in a very hostile environment. Bethany's right off the backside of Mount of

Olives. You guys know that. You've been there. You can walk over the Mount of Olives onto the Temple Mount in 15, 20 minutes.

- 00:41:42 So He loves them, but we're told in verse six He stays two more days in the same place deliberately. Now He knows what he's going to do. He needs the visual of resurrection, to tell, "What I did for Lazarus, called him out of the grave, brought him back to life, I'm going to do for everybody. I'm going to show you what I'm going to do myself."
- 00:42:05 So He wants him dead and buried, and that happens. He has a little conversation with the disciples for a while, and they don't understand. He says, "He sleeps, but I go to wake him." They say, "Well, if he's sleeping, it'll be well." Then Jesus ... Because the disciples always took Him too literally. We always do that. We take Jesus way too literally sometimes.
- 00:42:28 Verse 14, let's pick it up there, "Then said Jesus unto them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe.'" Believe what? "Believe that I will bring the resurrection." "Nevertheless let us go unto him."
- 00:42:47 Now sometimes when I teach this, ask people, they all know Doubting Thomas. Then I'll ask them, "Do any of you know any other story about Thomas in the New Testament?" and I never get a hand. Yeah, maybe once or twice, and usually from somebody who's heard me already teach this. They don't know another story about Thomas.
- 00:43:08 But here's the story, verse 16. Now before we do verse 16, let's go to verse eight. "His disciples say unto him, 'Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?'" "Don't go. It's dangerous."
- 00:43:26 So with that in the background, look at Thomas now in verse 16. "Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'"
- 00:43:40 Now why don't we know that story? Why don't we call him Devoted Thomas? Sacrificing Thomas? Courageous Thomas? This is Thomas at his best, and this is the way I think Jesus saw him. He had his moment. I understand Thomas wanting to see someone he loved and is alive again literally. I understand Thomas's heart only too well. But somehow it's in the human nature and, again, it's part of the spirit of our times to

remember people at their ... Maybe not their so best moments or to assess them at their not so bests moments. But I don't think Jesus did that. I think Thomas was Devoted Thomas to him. I want to remember this Thomas, Devoted Thomas.

00:44:34 Then we see Martha, poor Martha who gets the bad PR at the dinner at Bethany. He comes into town and Martha goes out to meet Him. Verse 21, "Martha unto Jesus, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.'" Now Mary's going to say the same thing in verse 32 when she comes, "'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.'"

00:45:01 There's something really poignant and moving about those words. Often we have the phrase ... I don't want to discredit the phrase or challenge the phrase or say the phrase isn't true. I just want to think about it a little bit. People say, "God is always there for me." I don't ever question that, but sometimes we, like Mary and Martha, say, "If you'd been here, something bad wouldn't have happened to me, or something wouldn't have happened." Sometimes He's not here and life comes.

00:45:41 Now He's going to fix it. He's going to fix it for Mary and Martha and He's going to fix it for all of us, and Lazarus. He's going to make it good. That's his promise. "No matter what happens, I'm going to make it good." He's going to make it good sooner than Mary and Martha think He's going to make it good. He's going to raise him from the dead.

00:46:00 But there is something very human about all of us occasionally in our lives we may find ourselves saying, "Lord, if thou had been here, something wouldn't have happened. Where were you? You could have fixed it. You delayed. You waited two days." Shakespeare says it beautifully. I felt it at the killing fields. I was at Hiroshima. That's a moving place to be.

00:46:27 One second it's a bright August day and three seconds later 80,000 to 100,000 people are dead just like that. I don't judge the dropping of it or the non ... It's a controversial thing. It's not something I want to get into. But it's just things happen. Shakespeare writes ... When Macduff's family are killed by Macbeth, he writes, "And did heaven look on and would not take their part?" Sometimes we feel that way.

00:47:00 Elizabeth of York says ... When her two sons are killed by Richard III, she says, "When did heaven sleep when such a deed was done?" Even poor Juliet, when everybody abandons her, "Is there no pity sitting in the clouds that looks into the bottom of

my grief?" So there are times that we might say, "If you'd been here, but you weren't here. Why weren't you here?"

00:47:35 Now His promise is, "I make all things good. I'm going to make it all good." I just understand Mary and Martha's words really well. I hope people can relate and understand those words really, really well, that God's job isn't always to stop unpleasant things from happening, or suffering. God's job is to get us through it and to make it good eventually in the end some way, and He always does.

00:48:04 Now we see Martha. Here's Martha saying, "If you had been here." She didn't get what she wanted, what she hoped for. But then she gives this magnificent testimony as good as Peter's. "'But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.' And Jesus saith unto her, 'Thy brother shall rise again.' And Martha saith unto him, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'"

00:48:34 Then those beautiful words we quote all the time, "'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?'" She saith unto him, 'Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.'"

00:48:58 Even though He was not there, and something that she didn't want happened that she felt He could have prevented happened, her faith is as strong. So why don't we call her Faithful Martha, Testifying Martha. See, it's that dinner at Bethany. This is Martha at her most magnificent. This is Thomas at his most magnificent. These are the ways I think we want to remember them. We want to do with everybody what we are invited to do in the New Testament with Thomas and Martha.

Hank Smith: 00:49:34 What was that phrase again you used, Mike? Celebrate the good?

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:49:39 Oh, celebrate the good and forgive all the rest.

Hank Smith: 00:49:41 Forgive all the rest.

Dr. Michael Wilcox: 00:49:42 Yeah. Now we get the beautiful ... Jesus comes in, Mary goes out to see Him. They know it's dangerous for Him being there, so that's why they go out of Bethany to see Him. Verse 33, "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping

which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled."

- 00:50:05 It's nice to know that we worship a weeping, groaning, troubled God, who weeps and groans and is troubled by our sorrows. Now He knows He's going to bring Lazarus back to life in just a moment or two. He knows what He's going to do. He knows this sorrow's going to be healed, but He still ... Shortest verse in scripture, verse 35, "Jesus wept." He still feels it. He feels their sorrow as though it were His own sorrow, even when He knows it's not going to last.
- 00:50:39 That's the Savior we all love and believe in, the groaning, weeping, troubled God who feels our pain even when He knows that pain isn't going to last much longer. So He raises Lazarus from the dead and brings him back.
- 00:50:58 The last thing that I would do ... You've got an English major, unfortunately. I thought a lot about Lazarus. He's the one that we don't know a lot about in this story. There's pictures of him coming all bound. There are stories of people are being called back from the dead and thinking, "Oh, it was so good on the other side. Why'd you call me back?" I've heard people say, "Poor Lazarus, he had four days in the spirit world. Now he's got to come back to this world."
- 00:51:29 Maybe that's true. Maybe life is just so good over there. But there's something wonderful about just being alive. We're taught in LDS theology that the dead long for their bodies, that it's seen as a bondage.
- 00:51:47 And so, I came across a poem a while ... Just a little bit of it, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. She's a 20-year-old entering this in a contest. It's just amazing that a 20-year-old can write something this deep and this beautiful, called *Renascence*. In a sense, every time I read *Renascence*, she takes me right to Gethsemane and right to the resurrection morning. She just takes me there every time, even though she's not writing about Gethsemane or the resurrection.
- 00:52:18 It's really a profound, profound 20-year-old. I've been on the mountain where ... I sometimes think this had to be an epiphany, something that really happened to her. It's just so profound.
- 00:52:28 She's on a mountain in Maine. It's a very easy cadence to understand. She says at the beginning, I'll give you this, "All I

could see from where I stood was three long mountains and a wood; I turned and looked another way, and saw three islands in a bay. So with my eyes I traced the line of the horizon, thin and fine, straight around till I was come back to where I'd started from; and all I saw from where I stood was three long mountains and a wood.

00:53:03 Over these things I could not see: these were the things that bounded me. And I could touch them with my hand, almost, I thought, from where I stand! And all at once things seemed so small my breath came short, and scarce at all. But, sure, the sky is big, I said; miles and miles above my head. So here upon my back I'll lie and look my fill into the sky.

00:53:27 And so I looked, and after all, the sky was not so very tall. The sky, I said, must somewhere stop. And, sure enough, I see the top! The sky, I thought, is not so grand; I 'most could touch it with my hand! And reaching up my hand to try," and she reaches up her hand to touch the sky, and she cried to feel it touch the sky, because now this little bounded world ... Sometimes we live in these little bounded worlds and we don't see beyond our own little horizons. And so, God is going to say, "let me give you my view." "Infinity came down and settled over me."

00:54:11 First of all, she hears the whirl of the universe, and the planets and the stars, and the clockwork motion that God controls in there. Then she feels all the sins of all the world. She feels all the pains. "For my omniscience paid I toll in infinite remorse of soul. All sin was of my sinning, all atoning mine, and mine the gall of all regret. Mine was the weight of every brooded wrong, the hate that stood behind each envious thrust. Mine every greed, mine every lust. And all the while, for every grief, each suffering, I craved relief with individual desire."

00:54:55 I'm not feeling this as a body. I'm feeling every individual's grief and sorrow and sin. Then she feels people burning in a fire. She feels people starving. She sees a shipwreck at sea and watches people drowning.

00:55:14 She said, "No hurt I did not feel, no death that was not mine; mine each last breath that, crying, met an answering cry from the compassion that was I. All suffering mine, and mine its rod; mine, pity like the pity of God. Ah, awful weight! Infinity pressed down upon the finite me!"

00:55:39 So from this little tiny perspective, which sometimes we have our little bounded lives, suddenly she sees from God's

perspective, feels the weight, the pain, the sorrow, the suffering, the sin, the grief. To me, that's Gethsemane in a sense.

00:55:58 It crushes her. She wants to die. The weight is so great that she can't get the last breath out. Maybe you've been with somebody when they died. I've been with my father and my wife. There's that last breath, the giving up of the soul, that last ... It always seems to be relaxed and just that last emptying of the lungs slowly.

00:56:26 But the weight is so great, she can't. The weight pushes her down into the grave. Now down into the grave, she's dead. Finally, the weight rolls off her of all this pain and all this sorrow. The final breath goes out and she's buried.

00:56:47 So can you picture under the grave now? So there she is. "Deep in the earth I rested now. Cool is its hand upon the brow and soft its breast beneath the head of one who is so gladly dead." Then she hears it raining.

00:57:05 Now Edna St. Vincent Millay, who wrote this, loved New England springs. She loved the smell of the orchards and the freshness of the rain and the sunshine and the blue sky. She loved the beauty of nature.

00:57:24 Sure, she is down in the grave and she can hear it raining. She says, "I lay and heard each pattering hoof upon my lowly, thatched roof, and seemed to love the sound far more than ever I had done before. For rain it hath a friendly sound to one who's six feet underground; and scarce the friendly voice or face, a grave is such a quiet place. The rain, I said, is kind to come and speak to me in my new home." Now we begin to understand maybe Lazarus, and maybe all of us.

00:58:02 "I would I were alive again to kiss the fingers of the rain, to drink into my eyes the shine of every slanting silver line, to catch the freshened, fragrant breeze from drenched and dripping apple trees. For soon the shower will be done, and then the broad face of the sun will laugh above the rain-soaked earth until the world with answering mirth shakes joyously, and each round drop rolls, twinkling, from its grass-blade top.

00:58:41 How can I bear it, buried here, while overhead the sky grows clear and blue again after the storm? O, multi-colored, multiform, beloved beauty over me, that I shall never, never see again! Spring-silver, autumn-gold, that I shall never more

behold! Sleeping your myriad magics through, close-sepulchred away from you! O God, I cried, give me new birth, and put me back upon the earth! Upset each cloud's gigantic gourd and let the heavy rain, downpoured in one big torrent, set me free, washing my grave away from me!"

- 00:59:29 Just the joy of a spring day in New England is enough. I'll pay the price of all that weight. I just want to be alive again. Easter asks us a question, is the joy of Sunday worth the pain of Friday? That's what Easter's all about. It's that question. Is the joy of Sunday at the Garden Tomb worth the pain of Friday in Gethsemane and on the cross?
- 01:00:06 Edna St. Vincent Millay is going to say, "Yes, yes, it's worth it. The joys of life is worth it." So she prays, "Put me back on earth." A rainstorm develops and lightning flashes and the thunder comes. New England can have really heavy rains, and a rainstorm comes washing down and hits her grave.
- 01:00:41 Notice as we go through how her senses awaken one-by-one. "The big rain in one black wave fell from the sky and struck my grave. I know not how such things can be; I only know there came to me a fragrance such as never clings to aught save happy living things; a sound as of some joyous elf singing sweet songs to please himself, and, through and over everything, a sense of glad awakening.
- 01:01:18 The grass, a tiptoe at my ear, whispering to me I could hear; I felt the rain's cool fingertips brushing tenderly across my lips, laid gently on my sealed sight, and all at once the heavy night fell from my eyes and I could see, a drenched and dripping apple tree, a last long line of silver rain, a sky grown clear and blue again. And as I looked a quickening gust of wind blew up to me and thrust into my face a miracle of orchard breath, and with the smell, I know not how such things can be! I breathed my soul back into me."
- 01:02:07 You can see that moment, the moment when the breath left. Because the weight was so great, the Friday so great pressing, now just the joy of a New England rainstorm. She breathes in that beautiful smell of the orchard. We've probably all been in an orchard, especially after rain. The fragrance just ... I used to like to walk in the orange groves in Southern California.
- 01:02:34 "Up then from the ground sprang I and hailed the earth with such a cry as is not heard save from a man who has been dead, and lives again. About the trees my arms I wound; like one gone

mad I hugged the ground; I raised my quivering arms on high; I laughed and laughed into the sky."

- 01:03:00 Then she remembers who gave it all to her. I can see Lazarus coming out of the grave and looking at the faces of his sisters, and the joys of the green of the fig trees and the gray green of the olives, and the fresh breezes that flow over the Mount of Olives, and the sheep feeding on the grasses and the wildflower, whatever it was for him, certainly the faces of those two sisters.
- 01:03:29 She remembers who gave it all to her. "I laughed and laughed into the sky, till at my throat a strangling sob caught fiercely, and a great heart throb sent instant tears into my eyes; O God, I cried, no dark disguise can e'er hereafter hide from me thy radiant identity! Thou canst not move across the grass but my quick eyes will see Thee pass, nor speak, however silently, but my hushed voice will answer Thee. I know the path that tells Thy way through the cool eve of every day; God, I can push the grass apart and lay my finger on Thy heart!"
- 01:04:16 She sees him everywhere, and all the joys, all the beauty of life. What a wonderful grand thing life is with all of its smells and senses and touch and sights, its people.
- 01:04:30 So I don't think Lazarus came back thinking, "Oh my gosh, the spirit world was so wonderful." Maybe he did, but life is a pretty wonderful thing. This is a reminder of the resurrection. Like I say, I can't think of any description of the resurrection better than Edna St. Vincent Millay's.
- 01:04:48 Whatever those moments in your life where it was just a wonderful day to be alive. You were just glad for senses and the beauty around you, for the people around you, Sunday's joy is worth the pain of Friday.
- 01:05:08 Sometimes in our life we understand that. I'll just give you one example. When I was engaged to Laurie ... She's always in my brain. She's always in my mind. She's just always there.
- 01:05:22 Anyway, I went back to Southern California, she went back to Canada. We were going to be married in Canada. We were gone six, seven weeks. And I was beginning to forget what she looked like and what her voice sounded like. I had her picture.
- 01:05:37 Long distance was too expensive in those days for us to afford it as students. So I drove up. The week we were going to be

married, I drove all day to Salt Lake to pick my father up, and I was going to spend the night and then drive the next day. But I was just too eager. I just couldn't sleep. I had to go. I had to ...

- 01:05:55 So I told my dad I'm going to drive all night. "I'm not tired. I'll be fine. I'll just make the drive. I'm going to just drive." I called Laurie on my dad's phone. He could pay for it. I told her I'd be there in the morning.
- 01:06:11 So in the morning, she was getting ready, and I got there a little before she expected me. She was in the bedroom in front of the mirror, getting her hair down. Her mother tried to keep me out of the room, but I just was ... She was dressed. She was fine. She was almost finished, just needed to get that hair down a little bit more and combed. I burst into the room.
- 01:06:39 I can remember sitting on that bench next to her. I can feel her warmth still. Laurie's hair, it was long and fell almost to her back. Laurie's hair was like a fresh mountain stream flowing down from high places. You could bury your hands in the brown flow of it. I could smell the perfume and the shampoo.
- 01:07:12 I kissed that little silk spot on her temple and looked in her eyes and saw there's a look, especially when we're young, that says, "I love and I am loved." It's a look of joy. I heard her say, "I missed you."
- 01:07:39 Laurie and I used to do a little ... I just said, "Can I just have one? Just one?" and then she would kiss me. I said, "Can I just have one?"
- 01:07:49 That was a good day to be alive. The God who can give all that back to me, the God who can return the sights and the smells and the touch and the warmth and the voice who can restore all that is a God worth all my love and all my devotion.
- 01:08:20 That is what the resurrection's all about. That is what he's trying to teach the disciples in John 11 with Lazarus. "What I'm doing with Lazarus and Mary and Martha, restoring all the joys of his life and restoring the loves of his life, I'm going to do to everyone. I'm going to do that for all of you. I thank my Father that He lets me do it."
- 01:08:52 Millay ends her little poem. She doesn't end it there. She goes back to standing on the hill with the mountains on one side and the islands and the other, the little small world she started in. Sometimes our little selfie worlds.

- 01:09:10 There's a big broad world out there with a lot of joy and a lot of goodness and a lot of people, and a lot of love, a lot of truth. She's felt a lot of pain of her fellow men. She's understood how good life is, just in the simple spring rain of a New England orchard.
- 01:09:36 And so, now she says, "The world stands out on either side no wider than the heart is wide; above the world is stretched the sky, no higher than the soul is high. The heart can push the sea and land farther away on either hand; the soul can split the sky in two, and let the face of God shine through. But East and West will pinch the heart that cannot keep them pushed apart; and he whose soul is flat, the sky will cave in on him by and by."
- 01:10:16 The world is as wide and wonderful and beautiful as we want it to be, as we allow it to be. We just push it further and further apart to include more and more the joys and the pains, the heartaches and the triumphs. The soul can reach as high as God himself and commune with him and let him into our lives, or we can let the world pinch us and live in a very flat world if we want.
- 01:10:46 But the Savior came to open us up to all things and all people, and help us see the world and feel the world as He did. One day we will all know deep, deep, bone deep, soul deep, heart deep, mind and memory deep that Sunday morning is worth Friday, whatever your Friday is. If your Sunday morning hasn't come yet, it'll be worth it.
- 01:11:19 I think that's what the raising of Lazarus is all about. I think Lazarus would tell us that. It was just good to be alive again.
- 01:11:27 Thank you for letting me talk about some of my most favorite scriptures and stories about Jesus. One of the poems I love very much, and very few people understand the resurrection or Gethsemane, but Edna St. Vincent Millay was one who did. Anyway, thank you very much.
- Hank Smith: 01:11:48 Yeah, that was absolutely wonderful, Mike. I loved it. John, it's been a great day.
- John Bytheway: 01:11:54 Yeah. I was so excited to see the chapters we had, just knowing this is going to be great. But it was better than I imagined. So thank you.
- Hank Smith: 01:12:02 Yeah, absolutely wonderful.

Dr. Michael Wilcox:	01:12:05	Happy to be here.
Hank Smith:	01:12:06	Mike, thank you for being here. Thank you for taking time with us.
Dr. Michael Wilcox:	01:12:10	It's nice to be in town occasionally. It's nice to see the world. It is.
Hank Smith:	01:12:16	Yeah, occasionally. Come back to Utah every once in a while. Come see us.
	01:12:19	We want to thank Dr. Mike Wilcox for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. We always want to remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We have more New Testament coming up on followHim.
	01:12:38	Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references are available on our website, <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> , <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> . 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.
	01:12:54	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.
	01:13:05	We want to thank our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilsen, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Cuadra. We also love hearing from you, our listeners.

## WHAT ARE THE TWO SHORTEST SCRIPTURES?



- Hank Smith: 00:04 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the wonderful John Bytheway. Welcome, John Bytheway.
- John Bytheway: 00:11 Thanks. I wonder how wonderful I am. Thank you.
- Hank Smith: 00:13 You are wonderful. The question for today's followHIM Favorites, John, is what are the two shortest verses in scripture? And interestingly, they're both in this week's lesson. So tell us, what are the two shortest verses in scripture?
- John Bytheway: 00:29 Wow, they are. In John, we have, "Jesus wept." Why is he weeping, Hank?
- Hank Smith: 00:35 Yeah. So this is at the death of Lazarus. Everyone is around and he sees everybody weeping. He sees Mary and Martha weeping because Lazarus is their brother and he's gone. And it says that Jesus wept. When I was a seminary teacher, I used to have students want to do this verse for their devotional. And they'd stand up and say, "The devotional for today is John 11:35, Jesus wept." And they'd usually laugh. They'd think that was funny. And I would say, "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Stay up there. Why is Jesus weeping?" And they would say, "I don't know." And I'm like, "Well, look it up. Let's look it up."
- 01:08 So we'd go to John 11:35 and they'd say, "Well, he's weeping because Lazarus is dead." I'm like, "Well, does that make a lot of sense? Because Lazarus is about to be alive. He is 10 minutes from being alive. So could Jesus be weeping for that?" And eventually we would come to the conclusion that Jesus was not weeping because Lazarus was dead, but he has that much empathy for the people around him that he's able to feel what they feel.
- John Bytheway: 01:32 Perfect. It always reminds me of Alma the Elder, after he talks to the wicked priests of King Noah and some of them believe. And he takes them out to the waters of Mormon and says, "Here's the waters of Mormon." Are you willing to come into the fold of God and be called his people?" And one of the things

he says, "Are willing to mourn with they that mourn." And that's exactly what Jesus was doing there. Showing the empathy you just mentioned.

- Hank Smith: 01:55 Yeah. "Mourn with those that mourn." I love that, John. We could be better about listening so closely to other people that we start to feel what they feel, and start to put ourselves in their position.
- John Bytheway: 02:06 And it's so affirming for them that if you can say, Wow, I've been there. I know what that feels like." Or "I don't know exactly what that feels like, but wow." That can be so helpful to them to help them carry that.
- Hank Smith: 02:18 Yeah. So validating. John, what is the second-shortest verse in scripture?
- John Bytheway: 02:23 Well, I guess that would be Luke 17:32, "Remember Lot's wife."
- Hank Smith: 02:30 "Remember Lot's wife." John, what is Jesus talking about?
- John Bytheway: 02:34 What are we remembering there? Well, we talked about this, I suspect last year quite a bit, but they're leaving Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot's wife looked back. Elder Holland gives this beautiful talk called, Remember Lot's Wife, where he says, "It wasn't just that she looked back, she wanted to go back." And what happened to her, Hank?
- Hank Smith: 02:55 The scriptures say she turned into a pillar of salt. So hopefully Lot had his fries there.
- John Bytheway: 03:03 It sounds kind of harsh. Please read Elder Holland's talk to see what may have really happened there. And I have a commentary, Hank. Our friend Kelly Ogden, D. Kelly Ogden. His commentary, they actually quote the Quran, the Holy Book of Islam, which says that she is one of those who went back. Maybe more than just looking back, but went back. But it wasn't a good choice to make. So the Savior is saying, "Remember Lot's wife."
- Hank Smith: 03:30 Remember Lot's wife. Don't look back. I remember Elder Holland saying it can be, don't look back at the good times and think, oh, those were ... my best days are behind me. Or don't look back at your former sins. Leave those in the past. When something has been repented of as much as it can be repented of, then leave it. Leave it in the past. He says at the end of that talk, "Keep your eyes on your dreams. They're in the future.

You'll live to see miracles of repentance and forgiveness, of trust and divine love that will transform your life today and forever." He says, "Faith is for the future. Faith builds on the past, but it doesn't stay there. Faith trusts that God has great things in store for each of us, and that Christ truly is the high priest of good things to come."

04:14

So, yeah. How fun. The two shortest verses in scripture and we got him in the same lesson. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast, it's called followHIM. And we're with Dr. S. Michael Wilcox this week. You're going to love what he has to say about these chapters. And then come back and join us on another followHIM Favorites.