



“Ye Shall Be Witnesses unto Me”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

How does the Savior continue to minister to us, even after His conclusion of His mortal ministry? Dr. Stephan Taeger explores how the disciples proceed to change the world after the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Part 2:

Dr. Stephan Taeger examines how the Lord continues to minister to the disciples after the Atonement and how the gift of the Holy Ghost changes the disciples and Saints today.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Stephan Taeger
- 02:23 Introduction of Dr. Stephan Taeger
- 02:55 Background to the Book of Acts
- 05:28 How can the Savior continue to minister?
- 06:40 Infallible proofs
- 10:25 Kingdom of God
- 11:25 Prophets, Apostles, and authority
- 13:03 Jesus ascends
- 16:57 Replacing Judas
- 18:44 The Lord works through our cultural understanding
- 21:32 Prophetic priorities
- 24:40 Witnesses of the Resurrection
- 29:04 Organization of the Apostles and the Book of Mormon
- 30:51 Pentecost and the Holy Ghost
- 34:25 Clinging to the Savior
- 36:18 Holy Ghost as motivator
- 40:29 End of Part 1–Dr. Stephan Taeger

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Stephan Taeger
- 00:07 Peter teaches Christianity 101
- 03:45 Peter teaches Jesus is Lord and Messiah
- 05:49 Jesus ministers through authorized messengers, first principles, and ordinances
- 08:24 Illustration of first principles by C Terry Warner
- 13:50 Peter baptizes 3000 people
- 16:32 Signs and wonders by the Apostles
- 18:50 Jesus ministers through priesthood power
- 20:40 The confidence of Peter and others
- 22:27 The importance of the temple
- 24:34 Peter and priesthood power
- 26:25 Peter and John are arrested
- 29:45 Peter preaches boldly
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- 49:40 Peace and security in Christ
- 52:15 Seven ways Jesus continues to minister after his Resurrection
- 54:35 Dr. Taeger shares his journey as a scholar and a Saint
- 58:14 End of Part II—Dr. Stephan Taeger

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Biographical Information:



Stephan Taeger was born and raised in Western Massachusetts. Following a mission to Las Vegas, he received a bachelor's degree from Utah Valley State College, a master's degree from the University of Utah, and a PhD in Instructional Psychology and Technology from BYU. Before coming to BYU, Stephan worked for Seminaries and Institutes for about 17 years. Stephan is married to his wife Kirsten and they have six children.

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Hank Smith:	00:03	Hello my friends. Welcome to Follow Him. My name is Hank Smith and I'm here with the Pentecostal John Bytheway. John, Pentecostal, baptized by the spirit, speaking in tongues. I thought of you.
John Bytheway:	00:17	I would love to have one of those days that I could describe a day of Pentecost.
Hank Smith:	00:21	Yeah. Filled with the Holy Ghost. John, what do you think it would be like for those 11 apostles? Jesus has been crucified and has been resurrected, their world has changed.
John Bytheway:	00:32	What do we do now? Is there a general handbook of instructions? What are we supposed to do now? It was great, but are we done? What do we do? They have a whole world in front of them that they don't know what to do with, I guess.
Hank Smith:	00:43	Exactly. What is the Elder Holland quote? These 11 Galilean fishermen and a handful of other disciples are going to change the world. It's a good thing, John, that we have a Bible expert here with us today. His name is Stephan Taeger. Welcome Dr. Taeger.
Dr. Stephan Taeger:	01:01	Hi. How's it going?
Hank Smith:	01:02	Good. Good. What do you think it was like for those 11 apostles and the other disciples?
Dr. Stephan Taeger:	01:07	It must have been extremely difficult and trying to figure out what direction they should take, how to lead this movement that Jesus started, how to carry on the Kingdom of God. On my mission in Las Vegas, a movie came out. It was actually a DVD, for our younger viewers, that's a circular thing that actually plays movies and it was called Finding Faith in Christ and it showed the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. And a missionary friend, he actually showed the DVD to an investigator and very sincerely, without trying to be sarcastic, the investigator asked the missionary a question that was unintentionally extremely profound. It was actually more of a

statement. He said, "It's a shame that Jesus had to leave because we could really use him in our world today." And what the Book of Acts is going to do is it's going to show us how the Savior continues his ministry in our world, post his mortal ministry. What does it look like for Jesus to continue to do his work in our world now. And so that's what the Book of Acts is going to teach us.

- Hank Smith: 02:09 Beautiful. Elder Holland once said, "The location of the Savior had been altered, but the direction and leadership of the church were exactly the same." Hey John, why don't you introduce Dr. Taeger to our audience?
- John Bytheway: 02:23 Yes. Born and raised in Western Massachusetts. Following his mission to Las Vegas, he received a bachelor's degree from Utah Valley State College, now UVU. A master's degree from the University of Utah and a PhD in instructional psychology and technology from BYU and before coming to BYU where he is now, Stephan worked for seminaries and institutes for about 17 years. He's married to his wife Kirsten. They have six children and we're delighted to have you here to help us with the book of Acts today.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 02:53 Thank you, John. I'm excited to be here.
- Hank Smith: 02:55 This is going to be a lot of fun. Different than our previous lessons here, Stephan, is we don't have to jump around from gospel to gospel. We're going to stay in one book this entire way. Since this is our first lesson in the Gospel of Acts, do you have anything you want to introduce to us before we jump in?
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 03:11 Yeah, absolutely. Luke wrote the book of Acts. This is the sequel to the Gospel of Luke and he writes it to a man named Theophilus. We'll break that down more in just a second, who that might be. It's estimated to be written towards the second half of the first century. This is pretty important. It covers from the 30s to about 62AD and there's some significant themes that the Book of Acts hits on, the Holy Spirit, the witness of the apostles, quoting scripture. About one third of the Book of Acts is actually a speech and the book of Acts, people are always breaking out into a sermon and a speech, and then we also see a lot about the fulfillment of God's promises. It's actually very sophisticated Greek. It's written really well. And as far as the main character, the main character is Jesus and his continuation of his work. But secondarily, it focuses on Peter and Paul and their ministry as the Christian Church is beginning to be formed.

Hank Smith: 04:10 There is a great paragraph that opens up the Come Follow Me manual. If you don't mind, I'm going to read that and then hand it over to you, Stephan. "Have you ever wondered what Peter might have been thinking and feeling when he and the other apostles looked steadfastly toward heaven as Jesus ascended to his father?" Something we're going to cover here, I'm sure.

04:28 "The church that was founded by the Son of God was now in Peter's care. The task of leading the effort to teach all nations now rested on him." Oh man, poor guy. "But if he felt inadequate or afraid, we don't find any evidence of that in the Book of Acts, what we do find are examples of fearless testimony, conversion, miraculous healings, spiritual manifestations and significant growth for the church. This was still the Savior's church, still led by him. In fact, the book Acts of the Apostles could also be called the Acts of Jesus Christ through his apostles. Guided by an outpouring of the spirit. Peter was no longer the unlearned fisherman Jesus found on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, nor was he the distraught man who only weeks earlier, was weeping bitterly because he had denied that he even knew Jesus of Nazareth. In the Book of Acts, you will read powerful declarations about Jesus Christ and his gospel." I'm already excited just from our first few minutes here, Stephan, that we're going to take this apart. Where do you want to start?

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 05:28 I'd like to go Acts 1-5, but I'd like to continue to frame it around this question. How can we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us even though he has left his mortal ministry and what does that look like and how do we invite that into our lives? And I think the Book of Acts is just such a powerful framework to answer that question, and already in the first few verses we'd start to get some insight into that question.

Hank Smith: 05:51 That sounds like a fantastic way to go about this, Stephan. So I'm ready to jump in. What do you want to do?

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 05:58 Okay. So right in the very first few verses, we start to get a sense of where the book of Acts is going and how we can answer this question. How do we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us? So verse one, "The former treatise which is referring to the book of Luke, have I made oh Theophilus," and that's who the book is written to. It seems like the book of Acts could be written to more than just him, and it's hard to tell exactly who Theophilus is, but he could be a recent convert or a Roman official, maybe a member of the church. And he says, "Of all that Jesus began to both do and teach." So he says the book of Luke covered that until the day in which Jesus was

taken up after that, and here's one of the major themes of the book of Acts.

06:44 He or the Savior through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. And so right there, we start to see how the work of the Lord is going to continue even though the Savior's mortal ministry is finished, "To whom the apostles also he showed himself alive after his passion or sufferings by many infallible proofs." Now that is a really powerful little phrase there. If it's okay, I'd like to read this from the Institute Manual. What it says about these infallible proofs. It says the Greek term translated as infallible proofs suggest a token or proof that causes something to be known with certainty. During the 40 days when the resurrected Savior taught his disciples, those who saw and spoke with him witnessed infallible proofs, which included the wounds in his resurrected hands, wrists, and feet. So there's something powerful and sacred that might be referred to here in this phrase, these many infallible proofs.

John Bytheway: 07:49 Oh, got it. The wounds.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 07:51 Right. And then it says, "Being seen of them 40 days." Obviously we see a lot of 40 days in the Bible and in other scripture, one scholar refers to that as "important transitions." Another scholar I found refers to it as "divinely ordained periods" and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. So the apostles get these 40 days of personal ministry from the Savior training them, I would imagine, to go out to be representatives of him throughout the whole world.

John Bytheway: 08:22 Now I'm glad you said that Stephan. Somebody just sent me an email today, one of my friends that is also a teacher and said, "Hey, look up the lexicon on infallible proofs." So I did and I read a couple of really old Protestant commentaries that said that tekmerion, I think was the word in Greek. It said these were signs and tokens of his being alive, and I thought of our hymn that we sing, Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief, the tokens in his hands I knew, the Savior stood before my eyes and I thought, wow, look at that connection there with yeah, this is he who was crucified and is resurrected and those were the infallible proofs, these signs and tokens, which it's cool and makes us go, "Oh, I see what he was doing after the resurrection."

Hank Smith: 09:10 Yeah, John, I would also add that I think Luke is saying, and Stephan, you can correct me if I'm wrong here, but in some way he's saying, "Look, this is undeniable. This is not fiction. I have absolute proof as the sun shines, this is truth."

- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 09:27 Yeah, absolutely. In fact, that's at the heart of what Luke is trying to do in his original gospel is point to concrete witnesses of the truth, right? It seems like the Institute Manual points out this really interesting insight. It might be that third Nephi could provide a model for what happened during these 40 days. The Nephites also come up and in all of surety that he is the crucified one, the holy one of Israel, and then the Savior spends time to teach them and train them and teach them the gospel of the kingdom. So there might be something there to look at the Nephi as a model of what could have happened during that 40 day ministry. Let's zero in on this phrase in verse two, "He through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." So in other words, the Savior's going to continue his work through living apostles. In chapter one, the Savior tells them exactly what they're going to do as Apostles.
- John Bytheway: 10:22 Stephan and Hank, I'm looking at verse six. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, 'Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'" It's like all the times they thought, this is going to be a political messiah, "Are you going to do it now?" Did you get that impression when you read that? Man, we've been waiting for so long. Now, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Was there still a misunderstanding of exactly the kind of Messiah he was, do you think?
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 10:47 Yeah. It seems like there might be a hint of that there. It's taking them a minute to put this together what kind of kingdom that Jesus is bringing to the earth. It's extremely difficult to understand the meaning of the four gospels and the rest of the New Testament unless you understand what Israel was waiting for. They were waiting for a kingdom to come and fulfill the promises of Abraham, a messiah who would come and set things right in the world. And it seems like they're still trying to ask him, is this the moment where we're going to defeat the Romans and everything's going to be right. It's hard to tell exactly, but there might be some of that there that question.
- Hank Smith: 11:25 One thing I find fascinating just before we move on, you have Jesus acting through the Holy Ghost to continue his work when so many teach something to the effect of, we don't need prophets and apostles anymore because we have Jesus and yet here we are the very first chapter after Jesus' ascension and he's working through apostles and prophets. So I think the book of Acts tells me I should be looking for more apostles who have the Holy Ghost, to teach me.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 11:58 Yeah, absolutely. It's interesting when people will say things like, "I don't need prophets, I don't need apostles." Either a secular person would say, "I don't need a religious person to direct my life." Or a religious person might say, "I only need Jesus of Nazareth." But in all truth, every single person on this planet, believe it or not, has prophets. Every single person has people they point to, to give them guidance and direction and there is no New Testament, there is no story of Jesus without Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Divinely appointed representatives. And so it has been in the plan of our father in heaven to call prophets since the beginning, and it always will be as long as the people are willing to receive. It's not a time of apostasy. There will always be people who will be called to lead his church.

John Bytheway: 12:42 Oh, I love that. I think one of our previous guests said, "Who are you discipled by?" Does that ring a bell, Hank?

Hank Smith: 12:50 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 12:50 So everybody's a disciple of something. They have thought leaders that they follow or something. That's a good point.

Hank Smith: 12:58 What a fantastic answer, Stephan. All right, we keep stopping you. Let's keep going.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 13:03 So in verse eight we get a lot of clarity on exactly how the apostles are going to go out and what their work is going to be and where their work is actually going to focus on. It says, "The Savior says to them, 'I'm standing on the Mount of Olives, but you shall receive power. After that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem.'" Now if you want to mark in your scriptures at home in your own copy, if you're listening, you might want to put chapters one through seven there because chapters one through seven of the Book of Acts cover the witness of the apostles in Jerusalem. And if you want to write at home chapters eight and nine, that's where we see the ministry of the apostles in Judea and Samaria, those chapters and unto the uttermost part of the earth, and that's chapters 10 through 28. And the book of Acts is actually going to end in Rome because in the ancient world they would've thought of that as the ends of the earth. We've covered our understanding of the known world.

14:02 In fact, we see Paul preaching the gospel in Acts 28 and it shows that the gospel has now gone to all the ends of the earth. "And when he had spoken these things while they beheld, he was

taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, 'Ye men of Galilee.'" So Judas who was a Judean, was actually dead at this point. "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? The same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

14:46 So Elder Holland has a fantastic quote about this. He says, "Jesus Christ and his father, the God and Father of us all appeared to the boy prophet Joseph Smith in fulfillment of that ancient promise that the resurrected Jesus Christ would again restore his church on earth and again 'come in like manner' as those Judean saints had seen him ascend into heaven." And so at least partially, the first vision might play on this motif of, we see the Father and the Son come back down in like manner as the way the Savior ascended up into heaven. We're beginning to see in this our day the restoration of these promises and fulfillment of what the Book of Acts is talking about.

John Bytheway: 15:30 I always thought that was second coming, so that's cool to think... And I've heard people say that in reality we should maybe call it second comings because there's so many different visits. Maybe the first vision is one of those that's cool. Where was that, Elder Holland?

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 15:45 He says that in Ensign 2006, page 106, Prophets in the Land Again.

Hank Smith: 15:52 I've always read this as these angels looking at these guys saying, "Well, why you staring up? You know what to do, get moving, get going. Why you just standing there? Let's go."

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 16:06 That's such a good point, Hank, because we want to ask ourselves now the Savior leaves and like you framed it at the beginning of our time together, what do you do now? And of all of the things we could do, what do we do? Organize a ward camp out? Do we look over the budgets? Do we figure out the hymns? To keep the kingdom of God going, what's the first thing that we're going to do? What is the most important part and it's continuing the kingdom of God on earth and we see what they do. Let's just go to verse 20 if that's okay. It says, "Peter stands up and he's speaking and he says 'It is written in the book of Psalms.'" He's speaking to a group of followers, "Let his habitation be desolate and let no man dwell therein." That's a quote directly from Psalm 69:25 "And his bishop work, let another take." That's Psalm 109:8.

- 16:57 What is Peter talking about here? For Peter, he sees in the book of Psalms an indirect prophecy about the need to replace Judas. "Wherefore of these men which have 1.," I've added the one obviously, "Accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until that same day that he was taken from us, must be 2. ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." So Peter says, "We've got to replace Judas and these people have to have two requirements. They have to have been with us since the ministry of John and they have to be a witness with us of his resurrection." That's probably the most important part is that they have to continue to be a witness of his resurrection.
- 17:48 Paul is going to be called as an apostle. He obviously doesn't fit into that first category, but he fits into the most important category, which is, he was called to be a witness of his resurrection and they appointed too Joseph called Barsabbas whose surname, which just means family name, Justus and Mathius. And they prayed and said, "Thou Lord," I just have to stop here for a second. This is such a sacred and powerful moment where they're seeking the will of God to know who should be the next apostle. It almost feels like this incredibly sacred privilege to get to overhear this prayer. They prayed and said, "Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou has chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship for which Judas by transgression fell that he might go to his own place," and they gave forth their lots.
- 18:44 Now we're not exactly sure how they did this. There's just different ways they could have randomized an answer. Maybe they wrote down names, drew something out, had a yes/no written on rocks or pottery or some form of trying to randomize these two names and the lot fell upon Mathius and he was numbered with the 11 apostles.
- 19:05 Now just really quick, I actually really love this story because it shows that the Lord will often work through our cultural understandings to bring about revelation in his will. In the first century, they thought this was one way that God could communicate with them and the Lord in his goodness and kindness communicates with them through this casting of lots to call this new apostle. Okay, so back to our overall question. How can we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us even though his mortal ministry is finished? The first thing, the foundational thing here is to connect with living apostles and prophets. That's one of the primary ways that the Savior continues to minister to us is through living apostles and

prophets. In your own unique ways, how do you stay connected to the teachings of latter-day apostles and prophets?

John Bytheway: 19:55

I like that you said the Lord works through our cultural understanding because I know that, gave forth their lots sounds more like a vote than a casting their lots, which sounds like throwing the dice and it's hard for us to wrap our heads around what? They cast lots for something this important? and so I like gave forth their lots. I hope that's what it means, but I also just love to show my students how they started. They prayed. They were seeking the will of God, not their own will at the beginning of this process. Like you said, so important, so sacred. So they started asking God and using whatever their cultural understanding was for him to manifest His will. I like that you said that.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 20:41

Yeah, and whatever method they used, what's most important is that they prayed and sought the will of God and received it. In the end, it's revelation that transcends culture and allows God to speak to us in whatever culture or historical setting we're in. Right? So back to our original question, how can we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us even though his mortal ministry is finished? What we see here in Acts 1 is to connect with living apostles and prophets. This is foundational for the work of the Lord to continue after the Savior's mortal ministry. And I think obviously, the simplest way to connect with apostles and prophets is to listen and take in conference messages from the leaders of the church. But I think there's some other things that we can do as well to make sure that we're really staying connected to those who hold the keys to the kingdom.

21:32

For example, I find it really important to discern prophetic priorities. There's lots of talks given, but then when you start seeing themes and ideas repeated, that seems to be one of the clearest ways that the Lord is directing his kingdom. And just for me, some of the prophetic priorities that we've been picking up on the last few years are one, President Nelson's emphasis on us to gather Israel, also for us to know our true identity as children of God, children of the covenant, disciples of Christ. One of the things that the leaders of the church have been teaching often, recently, is to teach the laws of God, the commandments of God, and to be bold in that but to do it with love. To this idea of both law and love at the same time, obviously, the Sabbath has been something that President Nelson has been teaching. That's the Savior working through living apostles and prophets to direct his kingdom in our day and that's allowing the Savior to minister to us, to heal us as we're obedient to that council.

- Hank Smith: 22:30 Which is going to happen here. A lot of people are going to be healed by these apostles both in word and deed. I love this phrase in verse 24 that you talked about as they're choosing the new apostle, they prayed and said "Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all." And that's one way I think about the apostles. One way I connect is I get a sense of where their heart is. When you hear them speak, I've had a chance a couple of times to be around them and you know can sense where their heart is and why they were chosen, because their hearts are so centered on doing good and helping as many people as possible. I don't know, John, you were around when who was called? Was it Wilford Woodruff?
- John Bytheway: 23:14 He was going to send me a telegram, but they hadn't invented that yet. So I think that they're always pointing us to Christ too. It's very clear, as you've said Stephan, that they're being guided and are pointing us to Christ and I was going to add the covenant path to one of those things. It's such a good, wonderful way of describing that we're on a journey and a path and that path involves covenants and that covenants involves gathering Israel and all those things come together the way you expressed it.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 23:49 One of the blessings we have also in the modern age is that we can follow the leaders of the church on social media and can you imagine if we had that in Nephi or Paul's time? And we get these little powerful insights from them. We see pictures of them ministering all over the world and it's just a little book of Elder Bednar or a little book of Elder Rasband. It's such a blessing that we can get to witness the Lord working through them almost in real time.
- Hank Smith: 24:17 Yeah, that's fantastic. This Mathias, I've always been interested in him because he's been there the whole time. He's never mentioned in the gospels, but apparently, he's been there. He's been with them since the baptism of John and he's been with us up till the resurrection. To me, he represents so many people that are unknown.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 24:40 The apostles are obviously called at this time to direct and lead the church by revelation, but the text also tells us in Acts that they're supposed to be witnesses of his resurrection. We're going onto sacred ground here, but I was wondering if I could just read a few quick quotes from modern apostles and prophets and they're witnesses of the resurrection. I don't want to add a lot of commentary because this is sacred ground. This is about Lorenzo Snow in the Salt Lake temple, and this is his granddaughter, if I remember correctly. "Then grandpa came a

step near and held out his left hand and said, 'He stood right here about three feet above the floor. It looked as though he stood on a plate of solid gold.' Grandpa told me what a glorious personage the Savior is and described his hands, feet, countenance and beautiful white robes, all of which were of such a glory of whiteness and brightness that he could hardly gaze upon him."

- 25:39 This is from Elder Melvin J. Ballard. He was on a church assignment and he had this experience, a visionary experience. He says, "As I entered the room, I saw seated on a raised platform, the most glorious being I have ever conceived of and was taken forward to be introduced to him. As I approached him, he smiled, called my name and stretched out his hands toward me. And if I live to be a million years old, I shall never forget that smile. I fell at his feet and there saw the marks of the nails and as I kissed them with deep joy swelling through my whole being, I felt that I was in heaven indeed."
- 26:21 This is from Orson F. Whitney while he was on church assignment and he had a vision of the Savior in Gethsemane. "As he prayed," speaking of the Savior, "The tears streamed down his face, which was toward me. I was so moved at the site that I also wept out of pure sympathy. My whole heart went out to him. I loved him with all my soul and I longed to be with him as I longed for nothing else."
- 26:46 1989, general conference, Elder David B. Haight and Elder Haight, he plays a very important role in my family. My father heard him speak and was deeply converted by his testimony. When my dad was looking into the church and coming into the church. It was actually Elder Haight who was instrumental in this testimony. This is what Elder Haight says in October, 1989. He had recently just spent some time in the hospital and he says very directly, "I was shown a panoramic view of his earthly ministry, his baptism, his teaching, his healing the sick and the lame, the mock trial, his crucifixion, his resurrection and ascension."
- 27:24 Elder McConkie, this is such a beautiful talk. I'll just quote from it shortly, Purifying Power of Gethsemane. Elder McConkie testifies boldly. He says this, "I am one of his witnesses and in a coming day, I shall feel the nail marks in his hands and his feet and shall wet his feet with my tears. But I shall not know any better then, than I know now that he is God's almighty son, that he is our Savior and Redeemer and that salvation comes in and through his atoning blood and in no other way."

- 27:57 And just one more from President Eyring, one sentence. October, 1996, this is from a talk, witnesses for God. He says this, "I am grateful that I know as surely as did the apostles, Peter, James and John, that Jesus is the Christ, our risen Lord and that he is our advocate with the Father." Everyone has apostles, everyone has spiritual leaders that they look to whether they're religious or not. Everyone has people they trust that I am so, so grateful that the leaders of this church are witnesses of the risen Christ, that they can testify directly and boldly that God truly raised his Son from the dead.
- Hank Smith: 28:43 Beautiful.
- John Bytheway: 28:44 I remember listening to that and the impression that [inaudible 00:28:48] when he told that story in 1989 because that was like... All of us in my family were, "Wow." Because he talked in detail about what he saw in general conference in that. Yeah, thanks for sharing those. I think just the very fact that they are putting Matthias in there tells us that this organization of the 12 was intended to continue, which that's huge.
- Hank Smith: 29:15 Excellent point, John. Yeah.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 29:17 That's a great point John. We also see precedence for that in the Book of Mormon. Fourth Nephi, there's a continuation of a calling of the disciples. And so it could be that Acts 1 is at least establishing a pattern or setting up for this continuing of calling apostles. We see other apostles called throughout the New Testament, but even if it's not, even if Acts one doesn't mean that, a lot of traditional Christians, the way they read this text is that the original calling of the 12 was supposed to be a terminating office. It wasn't supposed to last. Even if that's what is intended in Acts 1, the whole point of Acts 1 is that God continues to lead his church through revelation. And so as latter-day saints, we're not bound by what the Bible says. We love the Bible, we uphold the Bible, we revere the Bible. But the primary source of truth according to Elder Oaks is revelation itself.
- 30:08 So even if some scholar can prove something in a text, we're beholden to the will of God as manifested through modern revelation. So we've just witnessed the calling of prophets and their work, how the Lord continues to minister to us through their work. But prophets can't be available for every question all of the time. Well, we can't write to Salt Lake and ask the prophet which job I should take or how to handle a specific situation with a child or we can't ask Elder Holland to write our sacrament meeting talks. That wouldn't be beneficial anyways.

Well, how else is the Lord going to lead his church and work through his church besides just apostles and prophets? And I think we get a key insight here in Acts 2. Let's start off in verse one.

30:52 "And when the day of Pentecost," Pentecost, it's the first harvest. It's 50 days after Passover. It's one of the three major pilgrimage feasts that Jews celebrate. "Was fully come and they were all with one accord in one place." So the membership of the churches is in one spot and suddenly, "There came from heaven, as a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting." This represents the presence of God or his spirit coming into this house. "And there appeared unto them cloven," which means forked, "Tongues like as of fire. And it sat upon each of them." So these forked flaming tongues come down and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. And so the New Testament actually talks about two types of speaking and tongues.

31:49 One type is what we would call ecstatic speech. Paul talks about this in Corinthians. This is speaking in an unknown tongue that needs to be translated. But another type of gift of tongues is what we more commonly understand in the church. And that's when someone is given the gift to speak in a known language that they didn't know before. And that's what we see happen here in this chapter. The people have this powerful experience. Traditional Christians sometimes call this, or at least I've heard some call this the birthday of the church. The spirit comes among them and they go out and speak and talk to different people. And people are very shocked by this. The people in the street see all of these members of the church speaking in these different tongues and they're wondering what's happening.

32:33 But Peter standing up with the 11, this is verse 14, if you're following along at home, lifted up his voice and said, and this begins a sermon like we see throughout the book of Acts. Peter's going to stand up and give a sermon in this context, said unto them, "Ye men of Judea and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words for these are not drunken," just in case we were confused by that, right? As you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour." That's 9:00 AM.

Hank Smith: 33:02 That makes me laugh every time.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 33:04 It's too early for that.

Hank Smith: 33:05 We're not drunk, it's only 9:00 AM.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 33:08 Of the day. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," and he's going to quote Joel too here. "And it shall come to pass in the last day, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my spirit and they shall prophesy."

33:35 Now we've likened this verse also to the latter-days, but this just shows us that scripture is not limited to what it meant at the time, but the spirit of God can use a scripture in whatever way he wants to. And Peter is applying it to their time saying, "This is the moment we've been waiting for. God's kingdom is breaking forth as manifested by the coming of the Holy Ghost." In fact, the Book of Mormon consistently insists over and over again, if the kingdom of God is present, you're going to see the workings of the spirit, the gifts of the spirit, visions, miracles. So how do we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us even though his mortal ministry is finished? We connect with living apostles and prophets. And two, we receive the Holy Ghost. As we've already talked about, this is key in the way that the Savior continues his ministry.

Hank Smith: 34:25 That's awesome. Stephan, as you've talked about clinging to the Savior through the Holy Ghost. I have always loved Doctrine & Covenants Section 11 verses 12 and 13. It's easy to remember. 11, 12, 13. And the Lord says, "You can put your trust in the Spirit." And then he defines the spirit, "Which leadeth to do good, to do justly, to walk humbly and to judge righteously." And then he repeats himself. "This is my spirit." So it's so fascinating to me sometimes when people say, "I don't know if I've ever felt the Holy Ghost," and I always take them to this verse, Doctrine Covenants 11, 12 and 13, have you ever wanted to do good, to be honest, to be humble, to not judge people? Yeah, I felt all of that. He says it right there very clearly. This is my Spirit. So it's just one of my favorites. When you brought up the Holy Ghost, I thought, oh, I wanted to share.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 35:24 Yeah. I think what I love about that verse is when we're led by the Holy Ghost, that doesn't mean we're led like a puppet or it erases our individuality, our creativity, but the kinds of decisions that lead us towards those things, we can be confident that we're being led by God. And so the Spirit mixes with our own individuality and creativity to then do good in the world. As that verse says so clearly. First Nephi 10, verse 11 says, "And after," speaking of the Savior, "And after he had been slain, he should rise from the dead and should make himself manifest by the Holy Ghost unto the Gentiles." Right there in the Book of

Mormon, this has always been a part of the plan of God, is that the Savior will continue to manifest and minister to us through the Holy Spirit. And at least three ways that that's going to happen is one, motivation, two, inspiration, and three, transformation.

36:18 So the Holy Ghost here is described as fire and the Holy Spirit is an incredible source of motivation. The best. So as we are doing our morning devotionals at a table early on, wiping the sleep from our eyes, we've got scriptures, notes, marking insights down, and we read just the right verse and it fills us for the whole day. A little day of Pentecost every single morning if we do our scripture study right, or weekly church or temple. These are all things that motivate us to love God and others. The Holy Spirit also gives us inspiration. At the end of the day, we're just not smart enough. We need help, with family, with church, with work, and we plead with our Father in heaven to give us insight and inspiration on how to move forward with some of the most difficult challenges that we have.

37:06 And finally, transformation. The Spirit also changes our very nature. It makes it so that sin is less appealing. This is what King Benjamin teaches in Mosiah 3:19, that we become saints through the atonement of Jesus Christ as we yield to the Holy Spirit. I have a buddy who was watching some movies once, and as he was watching it, he noticed that as a kid, he wasn't offended by this movie, but now he was. And later on he was praying about it. He was talking to our Father in heaven about this, and he said, "Why does this bother me now?" And the Lord whispered to his heart, "You're being changed. You're becoming something new." And as we live in the Spirit, we notice that sin just has less pull on us. This is a part of the way that the Savior continues to minister to us in the latter-days.

Hank Smith: 37:54 Yeah. Little imperceptible changes maybe from day to day, but an experience like that, like your friend had, will show you how far you've come.

John Bytheway: 38:03 I like what you're saying there that For the Strength of Youth guide, it's very interesting to read to see how often any standard, whether it's speech, dress, media, it all comes down to keeping the Holy Ghost. And I like what your friend said, it's like you get to that realization where it doesn't say in there don't see movies that offend you. It says, "Don't see movies that offend the Holy Ghost." Well, it doesn't offend me. Oh, okay. Well then no, it's what makes the Spirit leave you. The sacrament table said, you always wanted the Spirit to be with you. So what is it that offends the Spirit? That's what we want

to keep with us. And it's fun to see the Holy Ghost working in here with these people like you said it. What were those words you used?

- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 38:52 Motivation, inspiration, and transformation. Yep.
- Hank Smith: 38:55 Yeah. And look what it's doing to Peter here in this chapter. We haven't seen Peter stand up and give speeches in front of crowds.
- John Bytheway: 39:05 Yeah, no kidding. This is so fun to see. The Peter in the gospels and the Peter in the Book of Acts, and you think, what happened? Well, that resurrection happened.
- Hank Smith: 39:15 Yeah. Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 39:18 Yeah. We see him motivated. We see him inspired on what to say, and we see him transformed. He's a completely different person.
- John Bytheway: 39:27 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:00 Welcome to part two, Dr. Stephan Taeger, Acts 1-5.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 00:07 Peter actually continues his discourse in Jerusalem to the people who are gathered and listening to these people speaking in tongues, and he says this, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs," you might want to know if you're following along at home that that phrase is used quite a bit in Acts, "which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."
- 00:37 Peter says, "You've seen all these miracles, him being delivered by the determinant counsel, a modern translation changes that to plan, so a determinant plan, and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it", or in other words, held in the power of death.
- 01:05 This is Christianity 101. Jesus is not just a good teacher or someone even who just did miracles, although that was a part of his ministry. He plays a unique role in the Father's plan. God raised him from the dead and now he's going to be on the right hand of God and direct and lead the church.
- John Bytheway: 01:22 What's interesting to me about this is I wonder if they thought, okay, now that Jesus of Nazareth is gone, this whole thing's going to die down. That small group of people, no, it's not going to die down. Now here's Peter coming out like this and *woo!* boldly, the one by wicked hands have crucified and slain and God raised up, and Paul's going to say similar things. It's like, no, the movement didn't end at all.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 01:52 You could feel the power of Peter's words as we read these inspired sermons that he offers. This Jesus had God raised up. Therefore, we are all witnesses. One of the themes we see again in Acts is this witnesses. Therefore, being on the right hand, Jesus is on the right hand or the place of honor in the ancient world, of God exalted and having received of the Father the

promise of the Holy Ghost. He hath shed forth this which you now see in here. The Savior has directed the Holy Ghost here.

02:22 For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, and Peter's going to quote right from Psalm 110:1, which is one of the most quoted phrases in the New Testament. The Lord, which would be the Father, the way that Peter's using it, said unto my Lord, which would be the Son the way that Peter's using it, "Sit down on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool." In the ancient world, victorious kings would place their feet on the backs of captured enemies according to one scholar.

02:55 What's being illustrated here and emphasized is that the Savior has been given authority and power and is on the right hand of God. He has ascended to heaven and taken his proper place on the right hand of the Father.

Hank Smith: 03:06 I love these verses where you've invoked all three members of the Godhead. God has raised him up. This isn't just Jesus doing this. This is his work. Jesus has been raised up and they have shed forth the Holy Ghost right in those two verses there, 32 and 33.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 03:26 Verse 36. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ, or in other words, the Messiah, the Anointed One.

Hank Smith: 03:41 That's quite a speech.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 03:43 It is. I almost feel bad commenting on it. I feel like I ruined Peter's preaching his homiletics here. He's just really speaking with such power. As we read this, we see that Jesus is Lord and Messiah, and this is the being that we should dedicate our lives to. Not money, not power, not fame, not any of the stuff the world offers, not even good things like work or family. I believe that Jesus is on the right hand of the Father. He should be the center of my life, that Heavenly Father and his Son should be the center of my life. What do I do? Get real practical with me. What do I do?

04:19 That's exactly what happens here is these people hear Peter's preaching and they ask the same or at least a similar question. Now, when they heard this, remember faith comes from hearing the word of God, they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and

brethren, what shall we do? What do we do about this beautiful truth we now know?" Then Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Hank and John, I feel like I've heard those things before, those repentance and baptism and the gift of Holy Ghost placed next to each other.

John Bytheway: 04:59

I'm so grateful for that. I feel like this last general conference, we heard multiple times the doctrine of Christ to get our focus on that and the doctrine of Christ as Nephi described it, as Peter's describing here is like Article of Faith 4. I think we may hear more of that too because there are a lot of wonderful things, but the main things are the doctrine of Christ.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 05:23

Yeah, absolutely. In fact, that's exactly where we're going here in just a second. Peter says, for the promise is unto you. Maybe the promise of the Holy Spirit or salvation to Israel. It's hard to tell exactly. I read different things on that. And to your children the future and to all that are far off like all people and everywhere, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. This is the promise to all people everywhere.

05:49

Back to our question, how do we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us even though his mortal ministry is finished? We focus on the first principles and ordinances of the gospel. We connect with living apostles and prophets. We receive the Holy Spirit, and we make the first principles and ordinances of the gospel foundational in our lives to everything that we do. This is how we stay centered on Christ.

John Bytheway: 06:12

I feel like baptism is an event, but it's the first part of the process of being born again. I love to think of the doctrine of Christ as repentance and continually progressing in, how do I say that, in being born again and having our hearts changed. Because I know when I was baptized, but being born again, much more of a process. In the Book of Mormon, he's like, ye brethren of the church, have you been born of God? It's like they're of the church, they've been baptized, but he's asking them if they've been born again. It separates those two.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 06:49

I love that. Baptism seems to be the moment when we're justified, where we're declared guiltless is the way that the church defines justification by faith on the official church's website guide to the scriptures. That's the moment we're declared clean and enter into the kingdom of heaven. But then the process of being changed, of being slowly born again is

sanctification. Those who are justified can have confidence that if they stay faithful, they're considered guiltless before God.

07:18 But then the process of becoming better is sanctification. How do the first principles and ordinances of the gospel allow the Savior to minister to us? How do they invite his healing power? We see throughout his mortal ministry that faith invites his healing spiritually and physically. Repentance is how we turn more and more to him and invite his power more in our life.

07:40 Baptism or covenants, which is clear by this text, that ordinances of the gospel are required, are how we officially use our agency in an outward way to invite the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ into our lives and then we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the constant communion of a member of the Godhead. We can see how he continues to minister and heal and bless us through these first principles and ordinances of the gospel.

Hank Smith: 08:07 And that leads to this idea of verse 40. You're going to be saved from this crooked world, from this perverse world. You're going to be able to get out of it. The world that you're in, the muck, the mire that you're in, you can get out of that through these steps.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 08:24 Yeah, absolutely. To illustrate how the first principles and ordinances of the gospel can really invite deep healing into our lives, I'd like to read a short story from C. Terry Warner. He was a scholar at BYU for many years. Very brilliant and faithful man. His work has had a tremendous influence on my academic work. He read this story in a talk he gave at a BYU devotional. It's called Honest, Simple, Solid, True. It should be required reading to get into the celestial kingdom. It's just a fantastic, fantastic talk.

08:55 As I read this, just notice the ways that the basic principles of the gospel invite deep healing into this couple's relationship. Dr. Warner writes this. I received a while ago a letter from a woman whose father had been emotionally neglectful and whose husband turned out to be much the same way. When she tried to talk about why he was distant, he said it was because he was always angry. This angered her more and she told him she was only angry because of his lack of love, which made him more inclined to withdraw.

09:28 They had got themselves encircled in the bands of death and the chains of hell. She went to the mountains alone intent upon reading one of the contemporary self-help books. She wrote

later, now, Dr. Warner's quoting directly from this woman, as a writer began to describe the intense need we each have for love, I began to feel more and more deprived, until I felt such a huge longing that I could barely breathe. I decided to write all of this down for my husband to read and enumerate the many times I had felt emotionally deprived.

10:02 I began to write furiously to pour it all out onto the paper. The longer I wrote, the more I began to have a feeling come over me that what I was writing was false. The feeling continued growing until I could no longer squelch it, and I knew intuitively that the feeling was coming from God, that he was telling me that what I was writing was false. How could it be false? I asked angrily. I lived it. I know it was there because I saw it and felt it. How could it be false? But the feeling became so powerful and overwhelming that I could no longer deny it or fight against it.

10:43 So I tore up the pages I had written, threw myself down on my knees and began to pray saying, if it is false, show me how it could be false. And then a voice spake to my mind and said, "If you had come unto me, it all would have been different." I was astounded. I went to church. I read the scriptures often. I prayed pretty regularly. I tried to obey the commandments. What do you mean come unto you? I wondered, and then into my mind flashed pictures of me wanting to do things my own way, of holding grudges, of not forgiving, of not loving as God had loved us.

11:21 I had wanted my husband to pay for my emotional suffering. I had not let go of the past and I had not loved God with all my heart. I loved my own willful self more. I was aghast. I suddenly realized that I was responsible for my own suffering. For if I had really come unto him as I had outwardly thought I had done, it all would've been different. As that horrible truth settled over me, I realized why the pages I had written full of my suffering had been false. I had allowed it to happen by not truly coming unto God.

11:56 That day I repented of not loving God, of not loving my husband, of blaming, of finding fault of thinking that others were responsible for my misery. I returned home but did not mention to my husband anything of what had transpired, but I gave up blaming knowing that I was in large part responsible for the state of our relationship. I tried to come unto God with full purpose of heart. I prayed more earnestly and listened to his spirit. I read my scriptures and tried to come to know him better.

- 12:29 Two months passed, and one morning my husband awoke and turned to me in bed and said, "You know, we find fault too much with each other. I am never going to find fault with my wife again." I was flabbergasted for he had never admitted that he had done anything wrong in our relationship. He did stop finding fault, and he began to compliment me and show sweet kindness. It was as if an icy glass wall between us had melted away. Almost overnight our relationship became warm and sweet. Three years have passed and still it continues warmer and happier.
- 13:10 We care deeply about one another and share ideas and thoughts and feelings, something we had not done for the first 16 years of marriage. That's C. Terry Warner, Honest, Simple, Solid, True. Did you see it? Did you see faith in there actually following the Savior, repentance, actually keeping baptismal covenants, receiving the Holy Spirit? Those are not just nice little cute little principles. They're absolutely transformative in our personal lives and every aspect of our lives when we actually take upon ourselves the mission to become like Jesus of Nazareth.
- Hank Smith: 13:46 Stephan, thank you so much for that story. I think I felt what is being described here in Acts 2, pricked in their heart. It looks like Peter and the apostles have a pretty big day in the font here in verse 41.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 14:00 This was just you like every other day on your mission, Hank and John.
- Hank Smith: 14:03 It's a typical day.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 14:04 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day they were added unto them about 3,000 souls."
We've seen the church growing. Here in the first few chapters of Acts, we're going to see it continue to grow and add more and more. I just want to say briefly, if we have faith and if we pray and if the Lord is willing, we can see these kinds of fruits in missionary work. There have been times in our dispensation and other dispensations where this is possible.
- 14:33 We can have the faith that the Lord can work these kinds of miracles in bringing people into his kingdom, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. Fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. We've seen that phrase already, and now we see it again. Just

as Jesus did many wonders and signs, we're seeing the apostles do the same thing as well.

- John Bytheway: 15:01 This is great, Stephan, this doctrine of Christ being incorporated in. We're watching it happen. We've heard stories of it happening. Sometimes when we see a verse like 38, we don't see the endure to the end there, which sometimes we include with the doctrine of Christ. But look at verse 42. You just read it. They continued steadfastly. I like that phrase more than endure to the end. I know Sheri Dew said once, "Those endure to the end phrases depress the dickens out of me," she said once. The idea, and I've heard Steven Robinson talk about it too.
- 15:32 We're gripping something with all our- and it's horrible drudgery. That endure to the end can kind of sound like that. I mean, I just think of handcart pioneers or something. But continuing steadfastly, that's a phrase I like. I want to equate that with enduring to the end. Just continue. Just continue in God, like the Doctrine and Covenants might say. And that happens again in 46, continuing daily with one accord in the temple.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 15:59 I just love that. That's excellent. We love the direction of apostles and prophets and guidance from the Holy Ghost. We love the idea of focusing our lives on the first principles and ordinances of the gospel. But let's say someone has tried those things and they're trying to get direction from the apostles and prophets. They've read their talks. They've tried to discern the spirit, but they still feel like they need a little bit more guidance, a little bit more specific guidance. How can the Savior continue to minister and help us even though his mortal ministry is finished in this way?
- 16:32 Well, chapter three, we're going to see one of these many wonders and signs done by the apostles and it's going to teach us a powerful principle about how to allow the Lord to continue to minister to us even more in our time. Now, Peter and John, son of Zebedee, went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, that's 3:00 PM, for the evening sacrifice. Jews would come to the temple and pray at this time. A certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful.
- 17:06 Now, the scholarship I read on this says that we're not quite sure where this is. Perhaps on the east side of the temple. He's there, this man, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple, who's seen Peter and John about to go into the temple

asked in alms, asked for some help, and Peter fastening his eyes upon him. By the way, we see this behavior in other healing stories too where they'll look directly at the person being healed. With John said, "Look on us." He gave heed unto them expecting to receive something of them.

17:42 He thinks he's going to get money, but he's going to get something much, much better. Then Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." The name of Christ is a theme we see throughout the Book of Acts invoking the name or authority of Jesus. He took him by the right hand and lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

18:12 He, leaping up, which might refer to Isaiah 35:6, the lame shall leap like the deer, which is a first framing for us and illustrating what the kingdom of God, what it will look like when it comes to earth. He leaping up stood and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

18:50 How can we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us even though his mortal ministry is done? Is we can connect with priesthood power, with the local leaders of the church who can use the priesthood in our behalf. Sometimes even though we've studied conference talks and we sought the discernment of the Holy Spirit, we still feel unclear about something. The Lord and his mercy has given us bishops and other leaders of the church who can speak in the name the Lord and give us inspired counsel and healing and direction.

Hank Smith: 19:22 This is such an impressive story. I'm struck by Peter. I mean, when have we ever seen him like this, as in chapter two giving these speeches, chapter three saying, "I can heal you"? Probably the greatest evidence there is of the resurrection is these apostles after the Savior dies. Let me read a paragraph here. This author is talking about the consensus that Peter and the disciples saw the risen Christ. It says the reason for this consensus is the persecution endured by the apostles for their belief.

19:59 "The apostles were repeatedly beaten and imprisoned. We have good historical evidence that James, Peter, and Paul were all executed for their faith. Given the suffering the apostles faced,

it is difficult to maintain that they knew the resurrection was a hoax. What would their motivation have been if they knew for certain that they had invented the resurrection stories?" I think that falls in right here with chapter two and three. If Jesus has died and really not been resurrected, what is Peter thinking?

- 20:28 How could he possibly do these things? Where would he get any of this confidence from, especially with the story you just read? I can heal you in the name of this man, in the name of Jesus Christ. I'm struck by their confidence. I think that can give all of us faith in the reality of the resurrection.
- John Bytheway: 20:44 That verse six, silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. It sounds like it could come across as, well, I don't have silver and gold. I've got a granola bar. It could be something less. And yet what he's saying is silver and gold, you think you want this. I have something so much better. For all of us, we may think silver and gold would solve our problems. But if we can just come to Christ, we can metaphorically rise up and walk in our problems. I love that verse.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 21:16 I love both those comments in connection with what you just said, Hank. If Jesus really is resurrected, if he's really alive, then Peter can continue to do miracles in his name. He could use his priesthood power to bless people's lives.
- John Bytheway: 21:31 Peter knows persecution is coming. Boy, Jesus told him that what they did to me, they're going to do to you.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 21:38 Yeah, absolutely.
- Hank Smith: 21:39 This is all taking place in Jerusalem, the place where people would know. They'd be like, "Oh, his body's right over there. The tomb's right over there. We can go. He's not alive," and yet they go right to the heart of the enemy with that kind of confidence. Let me ask you something else, Stephan. If this guy was laid daily at the gate of the temple, does that mean that the Savior didn't heal him? If he's been there that long, that Jesus may have seen this guy and not healed him?
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 22:06 There is that possibility. I've heard that take before. That could be the case. I mean, it's certainly clear that Jesus didn't heal every single ailment he ever came upon. That's according to the will of God and the Savior's timing, right?
- Hank Smith: 22:20 If that is true, that can be said for those of us who are still waiting for the miracle, that there's a timing.

- John Bytheway: 22:27 I think we're getting too, here, something about the importance of the temple. I've always wondered, along with the restoration of the gospel came this restoration of the idea of temples. It wasn't over. Once the veil of the temple was rent, it wasn't, well, we don't need that anymore. But look, verse 46 of chapter two, continuing daily in the temple. Acts 3:1, Peter and John went together to the temple and they keep going back there.
- 22:55 This is a question for people smarter than me, but I always thought they were in some state of apostasy to some degree, and yet Jesus revered the temple enough. He drew the money changers out and everything. Was it a symbol? I don't know what they were doing there, but what do you guys think about that? Because clearly the temple was important to them. They kept going back there.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 23:18 Most scholars read the temple cleansing as not so much about money, but about the affirmation, or let me say it like this, the validity that the leadership of Jerusalem was getting from the temple. Jesus is probably saying there like, "This is my father's house. That's not yours. Stop getting validity." People would have to buy stuff in the temple to perform sacrifice. But as far as temple and early Christianity, that's a really complicated, difficult thing because most traditional Christians read the New Testament of saying there's no need for a temple.
- 23:49 Jesus is the temple. There's actually nothing clearly that states that. The tabernacle is fulfilled in Hebrews 9 and 10, but David Calabro has gathered some really powerful evidence on early Christian temple worship. If there really wasn't apostasy, and there was, then we would expect that stuff to be lost, but just little hints of it there. But if you really want to get very academic about it, it seems like a lot of early Christianity is trying to make sense of the temple destruction.
- 24:16 Maybe that's why if they did see like, oh, we don't need the temple anymore, it might've been because of the temple destruction in 67 through 70 AD. Obviously I believe it was intended to be restored.
- John Bytheway: 24:27 Zechariah goes to the temple and that's where an angel appears to him. It meant something to God still.
- Hank Smith: 24:34 I'm struck by Peter here. We can see so many times in the gospels, especially when he was walking on water and he began to sink. The Lord reached down and pulled him up. Now look in Acts 3 who's doing the reaching. He reaches down, took him by the right hand and lifted him up, just like he was once lifted up. I

like how you're saying here that this is a connection to priesthood, and that priesthood holders can at one point being those who are lifted and then can be those who are doing the lifting of others.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 25:08

Yeah, absolutely. What's important to emphasize here is although it's such an honor and wonderful thing that the Savior uses Peter, Peter does this miracle in the name of Jesus Christ. That's what this is about. It's not about any particular priesthood holder, but it's about the power of God being manifested. If someone says, "I need help. I need the Savior to minister to me," one of the ways to do that is to connect with an inspired bishop who can lead and guide us.

25:37

But also I sometimes wonder, and Hank and John, I'd love to hear your thoughts on this, I sometimes wonder if we could ask for priesthood blessings more. That if we could ask people who minister to us or anyone else we could ask and say, "Hey, it's a new year. It's a new job. I'm going through a trial," or whatever it is, and have the faith that the Savior can work through a priesthood blessing.

Hank Smith: 25:57

I think so too. Just in my own personal life, I should definitely give more priesthood blessings than I receive. Way more. I remember the last time I received a blessing and I thought, man, it's been a long time, other than maybe a church calling or something like that, just a personal blessing. I thought, why don't I use this more?

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 26:19

If there are authorized people who can do miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, just as Peter did, then let's seek them out and receive God's blessings at their hand. About 5,000 people believe the apostles. The church continues to grow. Peter and John are arrested by the leadership in Jerusalem, the Sadducees, the priests, the captain of the temple. The captain of the temple maintained order in the temple, and he ranked just below the high priest. Well, I'm in Acts 4 now, we're switching ahead verse five.

26:49

"And it came to pass on the morrow that their rulers and elders and scribes and Annas", he's the high priest from about 7 to 15 AD, maintains this honorary title of high priest. The high priest at this time it would've been Caiaphas, who's the son-in-law of Annas, about 18 to 36 AD. "Caiaphas and John and Alexander", all we know about John and Alexander is what we get here at these two. This is obviously not John the Apostle. This is people who are part of the leadership there.

- 27:23 “As many as were of the kindred of the high priest”, in other words, those who were a member of the high priestly family, “were gathered together at Jerusalem. When they had set them in the midst”, the apostles, they bring the apostles to them, “they asked, By what power or by what name have you done this?” You could just hear the music coming in. It's like, here's another speech here. You know what I mean? Or at least a powerful moment.
- Hank Smith: 27:49 John, I can hear your question again. We thought we got rid of this problem.
- John Bytheway: 27:54 This Jesus thing again. Yeah, okay, bring him in here.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 27:58 And then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, "Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." He's going to quote Psalm 118:22. Interestingly enough, this is the last Psalm recited at Passover.
- 28:32 "This is the stone which was set at not of you builders, which has become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." So powerful. Continuing with our question, how can we allow the Savior to minister to us even though his mortal ministry is finished? We have to make sure that we are clear on what the sure foundation, what is the only name given under heaven?
- 29:06 The Savior provides the only sure rock and foundation upon which to build a life. Peter says very clearly, this is it. This is who we've been looking for. We live in a culture right now that is constantly offering other foundations, other ways to build a life upon. But if you want the Savior to continue to minister to you now, then we have to build our life upon him and only him.
- Hank Smith: 29:32 Again, I'm just struck by Peter's boldness. It even says that in verse 13, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they're like, wow. They're struck by it.
- John Bytheway: 29:45 They don't know what to do about it. What does it say? What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them as manifest to all of them that dwell in

Jerusalem and we cannot deny it. Oh, I like verse 14. They could say nothing against it. Beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 30:06

Peter testifies boldly, this is it. This is the person we've been looking for. This is the Messiah. He is the center. Our culture offers lots of other centers, lots of other false foundations. For example, some people, the center of their life become their titles that they give themselves. For example, they might see themselves as an intellectual or an athlete or a musician. There's nothing inherently wrong with that, but President Nelson has taught us that we have to see ourselves first as children of God, children of the covenant, disciples of Christ.

30:36

If we get our sense of worth and identity from anything other than the name of Jesus Christ as Peter has just taught us, we'll have a weak foundation. For example, if someone gets their sense of worth and identity from the title foundation of athlete and they get drafted into the league, they go to the NFL, and then they get hurt, then their whole world falls apart. Sometimes in our culture right now, people's foundation are their emotions and they just chase feeling good all of the time.

31:02

A fantastic way to be miserable is to try to make yourself feel awesome all of the time. Life just comes and goes. Feelings are like the weather. We accept them. We're mindful of them. We notice them. But instead, we try to live a vital life of truth and goodness. Another false foundation people might have is work. When people focus on work, one of two things can happen to them. One, they can get really good at it and they get more and more involved in their work, or two, they get really bad at it.

31:31

If they get their sense of worth from their work and they're not good at their job, then they feel worthless and broken. Some religious people make their foundation rules, a bunch of dos and do nots. That's a really difficult God to focus on, to worship. That's a God that is harsh and mean, and it's a God that allows you to justify if you're keeping some other rules and you can break these rules. It's not a foundation. One of the most dangerous foundations we see in our culture right now is freedom.

32:01

People will put freedom above anything. Freedom is a huge blessing, the freedom to do what I want or whatever it is personally or culturally, whatever. But there's something better than freedom and that's love, love of God and love of others. I just point these out really quickly just to say, look, Peter is clear. This is the head of the corner. This is the foundation we need to

build our life on. Anything else will fail us in the end. If we want to be healed and ministered to now by a living Christ, we've got to make him the center of our whole existence, our identity and worth.

- John Bytheway: 32:36 Stephan, talking about those different centers and it reminds me of the healing, the 5:12 verse, where your foundation must be on Christ and then it doesn't matter what happens because the devil, his whirlwinds cannot prevail if you're built on that. I also like the idea, it's going to come, we're all going to go through storms, but you'll be built on the rock.
- Hank Smith: 33:00 When, not if, but you cannot fall.
- John Bytheway: 33:05 Brace for impact. Here it comes.
- Hank Smith: 33:08 Stephan, I really liked what you said there. I think I personally do this sometimes, whether it might be work, titles, even our podcast sometimes. I'm like, look at our podcast, look what it's doing. It's not a place to build your foundation.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 33:24 Yeah, I love that. For me, that's one of the deepest ways to repent is to repent for my false centers, my false foundations. Peter says, this is the one. This is the sure rock. This is what Israel's supposed to build upon.
- Hank Smith: 33:37 And then they come up with a plan. Let us threaten them. That's our plan. Let's threaten them.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 33:47 Peter and John are threatened not to say anything more about Jesus, as if that's going to happen. They say, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20. They return to some believers and they pray. I'm in Acts 4:31. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken. In Acts 19, when the presence of God manifests itself, the whole mount quakes and where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the word of God with boldness.
- 34:24 The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. What's beautiful about these chapters is they keep pushing us towards community. This reminds me of Zion, Moses 7, Josiah 18. Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as

many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold.

35:03 This is not just a weekend church experience. They're forming a beautiful Christ-centered community that's practicing consecration. And laid them down at the apostle's feet, the things that they sold, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Joses, which is shorthand for Joseph, who by the apostles were surnamed Barnabas, this is Paul's later companion, we read about him in Acts 13 and 14 and other places, which is being interpreted the son of consolation.

35:34 Consolation is just another way of saying encouragement. A Levite and of the country of Cyprus, which is an island there. Having land sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Here they are practicing this beautiful consecration sharing their material goods, and I just can't help but think of our question, how does the Savior continue to minister to us? He does it through the ministry of others, through the community that we all are a part of, our ward families, our stake families. That's one of the key ways that the Savior ministers to us.

John Bytheway: 36:08 I remember just how thrilling it was to go back to church after COVID and to see everybody and to start to feel that sense of community again. Did you guys experience something like that? This is important. I mean, I started to really gain a testimony of gathering is important with each other.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 36:28 I think when people see this element of consecration, it's one of the best ways to invite people into the church when they become parts of our community and participate in that, whether they're a member or not. But regardless, the Savior continues to do his work through the ministry of our wards. I mean, how many times have someone brought over a meal at just the right time. Just a few weeks ago, my son, he was asked to be a ministering companion with one of our neighbors who is just a very faithful brother in our ward.

36:59 I happened to see them going to the house that they were ministering to and it just filled my soul with so much joy that I literally stopped the car. I took a picture of it and I just thought for a minute, what a blessing it is that we train the youth, we teach each other. I mean, the Savior is ministering to me through the ministering program by having this brother train my son how to be outward thinking. It's just such a blessing. My old

bishop used to text us on our birthdays, everyone in the ward. And then when he was released, he still kept doing that.

37:33 For me, heaven is being with the Latter-day Saints. I might be biased, but they're among the best people in the world because we live in these consecrated communities. Hank, I don't know if I got this story, but I remember you once saying here on this podcast, I think it was after one of your family members had passed away, that someone came over and helped out around the house and maybe mowed the lawn. And that imagery of someone silently helping, that's what we've been taught to do since our youth is we live in these consecrated communities.

Hank Smith: 38:08 We mourn with those who mourn. That's wonderful. Alex Baugh showed up at my house, he's been on our show before, brought over some treats. He said, "I was on my way home." I'm like, Alex, I live south of BYU. You live north of BYU. I promise you, my house is not on the way home. He said, "Well, it's a little detour." I was like, that's a big detour. You went the wrong way. But that's what we do, right? We're there for each other.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 38:36 I think it takes some humility to receive the Savior's ministry in that way through other people. We want to be self-reliant, which is a true principle. We live in a self-help culture, but Christians need to learn how to accept grace, especially grace from other people as well.

John Bytheway: 38:52 I was listening to the Saints Channel in my car. I have HD radio and it comes on. Boy, there's a group of sisters who were talking about ministering to your ministering companion, that sometimes that is a huge part of ministering, helping your ministering companion. I hadn't even considered that before, but they may need your ministering and you may have been put together for a reason. I thought that was probably true.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 39:18 We saw a beautiful part of this Christian community and now we're going to see a part. We're going to see a little bit more justice here in this next story.

John Bytheway: 39:24 And they dropped dead.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 39:29 In Acts 5:1 it says, but a certain man named Ananias with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price. In other words, they kept some of the money for themselves. His wife also being privy to it and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias," by the way, there are a few other Ananias' in Acts, this is a

different one obviously, "why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was that not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not light unto men, but unto God."

- 40:16 What's interesting in the text, just real briefly, is it puts Ananias at fault and also the devil. It is true that there is evil on this planet that tempts us to do evil, but we have a choice whether we give into that or not. In that sense, we're responsible for our own choices obviously, but the temptation comes from the evil that exists on this planet. Verse five and Ananias dies quite dramatically. The text says "gave up the ghost." And then Peter confronts Ananias' wife as well. She lies too.
- 40:52 Then Peter said unto her, "How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door and shall carry thee out." This is intense. No one has ever put this on their missionary plaque before these verses, right? Then fell she down straightway at his feet and yielded up the ghost. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. Great fear came upon all the church and upon as many as heard these things.
- 41:34 Going back to our original question, how do we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us? How do we stay in good connection with him? We have to be completely honest with God. One of our deepest needs, I'm quoting Tim Keller here, or at least paraphrasing Tim Keller here. He's a traditional Christian preacher. He says one of our deepest needs is to be fully known and fully loved, and the only way we could be fully known and fully loved is if we're completely honest with God.
- 42:03 Perhaps maybe Sapphira and Ananias, if they had quickly repented, if they had admitted what they had done wrong, if they had made things right earlier on and just been open and honest and vulnerable with God, then they could have gotten back on track. But the Book of Mormon teaches us something very, very powerfully. It's the beginning of the end when we start to hide stuff from God. It's the Gadianton robbers in Helaman 2, Mormon teaches us, that was the beginning of the end is when they start to embrace sin that we keep in the dark.
- 42:37 I remember one time I was sitting in an institute meeting. Elder Bednar, it was a broadcast, he told a story about someone asking... I think the kids' motives were good. It was a youth

somewhere and he said, I think his motives were intent. He really wanted to know. He said, what's the worst sin I can commit? Elder Bednar said what came out of his mouth was the worst sin you can commit is the one that you think you can get away with.

- 43:03 Spiritual death, one of the things that will bring that upon us is when we start to hide stuff and not be fully open and honest with God and with others.
- John Bytheway: 43:15 This is a hard story, isn't it? Because I don't think the death penalty is usually for lying. Was that a law of Moses thing? Could you be stoned for lying? I mean, I don't know, but does the church motivated by fear from here on out because of verse 11? But it's a hard story, don't you think, for the penalty?
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 43:37 Yeah, it is. It's hard to tell exactly what all the details are, what exactly is happening here. Obviously the story is true, but exactly how it all unfolds and what are all the details, it's hard to tell. But this is for sure that hiding things, it leads to spiritual death. We get in living color just how dangerous it is to be deceptive, to not be vulnerable, to not be open, to hide things from God and from others.
- Hank Smith: 44:04 Stephan, also when I read this story, I think about covenants, the covenant to live the law of consecration. It doesn't necessarily say that this community is entering into those covenants, but I think the story can tell us the importance of keeping our covenants. If you've made promises in holy places, keep those promises.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 44:26 Yeah, absolutely. I think our covenants become essential for how we determine what is right and what is wrong in our lives. They become foundational for our way of being in the world moving forward.
- Hank Smith: 44:37 Awesome. I don't want to bring out scrupulosity in people. For some reason, someone might be like, "I once told my mom that I was at school and I wasn't. Now I got to go and see the bishop."
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 44:51 The apostles are thrown in prison and then delivered. They go and preach some more, and they are recaptured and brought before the council. We are in Acts 5:28 saying, "Did not we straightly command you that you should not teach in this name?" Again, the name is being avowed. "And behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this

man's blood upon us." Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." So powerful. We'll come back to that in just a second. It's such a powerful line.

45:26 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew and hanged on a tree or the cross. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. When they heard that, they were cut to the heart and took counsel to slay them. It's getting intense here. The stakes are being raised quite a bit. Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee.

46:00 Now interestingly enough, in the Book of Acts, the Pharisees are portrayed a little bit differently than they are in the Book of Matthew, for example. Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor or a teacher of the law. He's probably a part of a more lenient school of Pharisees. Gamaliel, he taught Paul. He had great influence among the Sanhedrin, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space, or another, put them outside of the room.

46:29 And said to them: "Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about 400, joined themselves, who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought." He was said to be a prophet or claimed to be a prophet to Israel. Theudas claimed to be a prophet to save Israel from Rome. He went with his followers to the Jordan River.

47:01 He was executed about 44 AD. Gamaliel's point is this man's mission failed, and then he gives another example of a failed mission. After this man rose up, Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing and drew away much people after him, he also perished. And all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. This happens about 6 AD. It's a revolt against Roman taxation associated with the zealots. Now here's Gamaliel's point. He says, and now I say unto you, refrain from these men and let them alone. For if this council or this work be of men, it will come to nought.

Hank Smith: 47:38 You don't have to touch it, right?

- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 47:39 Leave it alone.
- Hank Smith: 47:40 You don't have to touch it. It'll fall apart.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 47:41 But to be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest happily or by chance, you be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed. Before we get to the main point from this story, one of the things I want to draw here, I'm thankful for the people outside of our faith tradition over the years, who have blessed our faith tradition, who have stood up for what's right, religious freedom, whatever it's been. The Lord uses people of all faiths everywhere to continue the work of the restoration.
- 48:11 He might do it through indirect means sometimes, but I'm grateful for these people who have fought up for truth and fairness on our behalf many times over the years. And to him they agreed. And when they had called the apostles and beaten, this kind of punishment is actually common for religious violations, Paul receives it in 2 Corinthians, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. Now, earlier they just said back in 29, then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."
- 48:46 It says here in verse 41, and they departed from the presence of this council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name and daily in the temple and in every house they kept quiet... Nope, doesn't say that. It says, and daily in the temple and in every house they cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. I'm so, so inspired by their continued focus and sense of purpose and mission, and I think one of the reasons why, and this has been brought up a few times already today, is that after the resurrection, they've been changed.
- 49:24 They know whose hands they are in. They know that they're redeemed in Christ Jesus. They know where their sense of worth comes from. They have the right center. So often in our modern culture, people say, "Oh, I'll get a sense of worth from myself, or I'll tell myself I'm okay." Let me go back to C. Terry Warner, a quote that he says. The reason why I think this is so powerful is because we all want to be like Peter and John. We want to have that kind of security in Christ. In our culture people say, "Oh, I'll just give myself security. I'll know that I'm okay," but watch what Dr. Warner says here.
- 49:58 He says, "In contemporary counseling circles, one of the fads is helping people gain a positive self-image. Since a bad self-image is obviously unhealthy, a good one must be desirable, so it is

assumed. What is unnerving about the current fad is that inevitably preoccupation with a positive self-image creates the basis for doubting the validity of that image." What Dr. Warner is saying there, what we can draw from that is people who have to constantly tell themselves that they're okay also raise the possibility that they're not okay.

50:34 Because they say, "Oh, I'm fine. I'm fine, I'm fine," they're just reminding them of the possibility that they're not. Peter and John, their identity comes from Christ Jesus. They have a sure foundation. They know they're accepted in God because of their faith, repentance, and entering into his kingdom. Elder Maxwell, he put it so well, he said it like this, those who are puffed up need constantly to be reinflated. It's a great line from Elder Maxwell. We miss him dearly.

51:02 That kind of insecurity could never do what Peter and John do here, just go out and continually preach the gospel over and over again. It's hard to live when we constantly need the approval of others. Peter and John say, "I have the approval of Christ, and I'm fearless." They're securing Christ. They know that their worth is in Christ Jesus, so they go out and preach the gospel no matter what.

Hank Smith: 51:28 I'm impressed here. We've looked at these five chapters, Stephan, and how many times has Peter testified? How many different groups has he testified to? You're right. He is a changed man. He's fearless from the man we saw.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 51:44 When we have that type of security in Christ, when we've been changed by the Holy Spirit that much, we'll share the gospel fearlessly just like him. When someone at work wants to do something unethical, we'll simply stand for what's right. We don't need to be bothered by people attacking the church online just like they attacked the church anciently. We just go to Gethsemane and Golgotha in our minds, and we remember how much God loves us as manifested through the sacrifice of his Son, and we'll be changed people too.

52:15 To sum it all up, how can we allow the Savior to continue to minister to us even though his mortal ministry is finished? We've identified seven things. One, we connect with living apostles and prophets. Two, we receive the Holy Spirit. Three, we focus on the first principles and ordinances of the gospel. Four, we connect with priesthood power. Five, make Jesus the foundation of our life. Six, be completely honest and open with God. And seven, receive our worth from what the Savior did for us, make that the foundation of our security.

52:49 And as we do that in our lives, I know for sure we will receive deep healing in our lives and then also be an instrument for healing in the lives of others as well.

Hank Smith: 52:59 Beautiful.

John Bytheway: 53:00 One of the things that has impressed me too as we've gone through this is just the idea of witnesses and that the Lord wants to work through witnesses and how many times they have said, "We have a witness." I really underlined Acts 4:20. I think sometimes as a kid I thought that a testimony was all about a feeling. And that's part of it, but verse 20 says we cannot but speak the things which we have felt? No, seen and heard.

53:26 Feelings are great, but they are talking about evidences as well as accompanying Christ all those years, things they have seen and heard, not just feelings, but there's fruits of the gospel, there's evidences of the gospel. I like that that's part of their testimony.

Hank Smith: 53:43 Very good. I was really touched by you saying, Stephan, this is Jesus continuing his ministry. Because if you read these stories, they sound like stories out of the gospels. Some characters have changed. It's Peter doing the healing and Peter doing the preaching, as before it was Jesus, but now the Lord is still very much at work.

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 54:03 We don't believe in a Christ that only lived 2,000 years ago. He is alive and he does the same things he did that he did anciently and on his mortal ministry. He heals, teaches, forgives. It's my deepest hope and prayer that every single one of us connect with that and invite that into our lives.

Hank Smith: 54:25 Stephan, before we let you go, you're both a scholar and a Latter-day Saint. What's that journey been like for you?

Dr. Stephan Taeger: 54:31 I'm so thankful to be a part of the restoration that celebrates learning, that celebrates seeking out the best books, but what I'm most thankful for is that I have found that as I do my research, my research is actually in preaching and homiletics, and so I study the preaching techniques of preachers from all different faith traditions. They feed me and inform me, and I'm so blessed by what they say.

54:56 But I have found that whether it's in homiletics or other areas of study that I do, that when I start with the premises of the

restoration, when I start with the assumptions of the restoration, things start to come together. The world makes more sense. Particularly what I have found is that as I try my best in my own broken way, try to live the gospel, that's really when the gospel begins to make the most sense. It's through practice, by actually trying it and living it in this world. The restoration celebrates learning and the world comes together.

- 55:29 I'm also really grateful for the models that I've had in my life who were disciple scholars. I'm so thankful to be at a university where I'm just surrounded by tons of people like that who first and foremost are loyal to the Savior and his called servants, and then also excellent scholars. What a blessing it is to be in a place like that, to be around people who are like that.
- Hank Smith: 55:52 Beautiful. What a great day, John. We now know the first five chapters of Acts. I'm feeling really good so far.
- John Bytheway: 56:01 They're fun. This is a fun story to read, to see what they went out and did. It's really fun to read this. I hope people just read verse by verse and read it like a story and have as many wows as we did reading this today.
- Hank Smith: 56:15 Just a handful of followers of Jesus. What does Elder Holland say? Without a single synagogue or a sword are going to change the world, and this is the beginning of it. They're going to change the world. Thank you for being with us, Dr. Stephan Taeger. Thank you.
- Dr. Stephan Taeger: 56:28 Thank you so much for inviting me.
- Hank Smith: 56:29 We loved having you. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we want to remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. More of the Book of Acts on FollowHim.
- 56:46 Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references are available on our website, followhim.co. Followhim.co. You can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on Facebook and Instagram. All of this is absolutely free, so be sure to share with your family and friends. To reach those who are searching for help with their Come Follow Me study, please subscribe, rate, review, or comment on the podcast, which makes the podcast easier to find. Thank you.

57:13 We want to thank our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Quadra. We also love hearing from you, our listeners.

Amanda Dunn: 57:26 Hi, there, Hank and John. My name is Amanda Dunn, and I'm coming to you from Atlanta, Georgia. I'm actually a police officer in the Atlanta area. My return missionary cousin got me onto your podcast and it has just been a wonderful thing to listen to while I'm driving.

57:38 It has increased my faith, it's given me credible resources to be able to share with other Christians that I work with, to be able to go to Relief Society and to teach young women and to be able to have like Lili de Hoyos talk about judgment and telling the youth that you need to judge who you're dating.

57:59 Just so much information that has helped me and to help other people. You don't understand how much this podcast is meant to me. I just want to thank you guys so much.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF
I FEEL "PRICKED IN [MY] HEART"?



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello, my friends. Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. My name's Hank Smith. I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. Hello, John.
- John Bytheway: 00:09 Hello, Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:10 John, you're amazing. You know each week we take on one question from the Come, Follow Me Lesson. The question this week is straight from the manual. Have you ever felt pricked in your heart like the Jews on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two? Maybe you did something you regret, or maybe you simply want to change your life. What should you do when you have these feelings? What do you think, John?
- John Bytheway: 00:31 That just means you're spiritually sensitive, which is a very good thing.
- Hank Smith: 00:35 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:35 Don't run away from that. The Lord's helping you. I like to think of the warning light that comes up in my car that says you're a little low on the motor oil. You don't ignore it. You take care of it.
- Hank Smith: 00:46 Yeah. Put a piece of tape over it. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:47 Yeah. It's not a good light to see come on, but you don't ignore it. It tells you you can do something about this. You can fix this. And so you're glad it's there. Ultimately, it saves your engine, right?
- Hank Smith: 00:59 Yeah. Exactly right. I've had students who say they avoid church or the temple or they avoid spiritual things because they know that they'll feel that guilt. And I say, no, no, no. Don't avoid, feel that. Let it sit for a moment and it's okay. It won't be permanent. You're not going to sit there permanently because what follows often after in the scriptures, like with Alma the younger or with Paul, anyone who gets this feeling that they need to change, it can be a moment of like, oh no, this is

painful, this is uncomfortable. But it's always followed with the light. Here comes the light of Christ to say you can be forgiven, you can change, you will change, and I can help you. So don't run away from that feeling. It's not a bad thing like you said, John.

- John Bytheway: 01:47 Yeah. You wouldn't have it if you weren't spiritually sensitive and you're sensitive enough that the Lord's saying, I can communicate to you, which is good, which is a great thing.
- Hank Smith: 01:56 Yeah. Maybe do a little journaling at that point. Jot some thoughts down. That can be a wonderful moment where you're open to what the spirit has to say to you.
- John Bytheway: 02:06 Yeah. And it happens to all of us.
- Hank Smith: 02:08 Yeah. We hope you'll join us for our full podcast. It's called FollowHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast, and then come back here next week. Join us for another FollowHIM Favorites.