



“The Power of God unto Salvation”

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 experience of being a sinner affect the experience of being saved by Jesus? Dr. Adam Miller discusses why faith is crucial to our experience of redemption.

Part 2:

Dr. Adam Miller continues to discuss grace, merit, and the law as they relate to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Adam Miller
- 01:50 Introduction of Dr. Adam Miller
- 03:22 Background to the Letter to the Romans
- 04:23 Dr. Miller’s training as it relates to the New Testament
- 07:26 How to approach this book
- 09:05 Dating the book and additional study helps
- 12:57 The Sermon on the Mount aids in studying this letter
- 13:32 First Key is God doesn’t hate his enemies
- 14:42 Love is a law, not a reward
- 16:25 Earning Heaven or the opportunity of Heaven
- 18:13 What does Paul mean by grace?
- 21:29 Our motivations
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- 27:40 Romans 1:25
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- 33:09 Misunderstanding love and trials
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Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Adam Miller
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- 1:06 Looking through a telescope backwards
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- 19:21 Romans 2:1
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- 48:30 Reflections on giving up the Law of Works
- 50:43 Works, the temple, and salvation
- 51:48 Dr. Miller’s final takeaways about Romans
- 55:25 End of Part II–Dr. Adam Miller

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Adam is a professor of philosophy at Collin College in McKinney, Texas.

He earned a BA in Comparative Literature from Brigham Young University and an MA and PhD in Philosophy from Villanova University.

He is the author of eight books (see links on the home page) and serves as the current director of the [Mormon Theology Seminar](#).

He and his wife, Gwen, have three children.

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Hank Smith:	00:04	Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with the amazing John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	00:11	Thank you. It's good to be back.
Hank Smith:	00:13	Yeah. John, we are in the Book of Romans today. I know you have some experience in the Book of Romans of course. What are you looking forward to learning from Paul?
John Bytheway:	00:22	I was talking with my wife about this last night and I said, just at family prayer, "Somebody, Book of Romans, anything." "I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." That's what they all remembered, but there's a lot of amazing teachings in here about how grace and works, I mean, all these things.
	00:38	There's some wonderful stuff and so I'm so glad we're going to talk about this today, because I want to feel more understanding about justification, sanctification, grace, works, merits, Christ, all of this. So really looking forward to it.
Hank Smith:	00:53	John, we have an expert joining us this week. He's been with us before, Dr. Adam Miller. Adam, what do our listeners have to look forward to in these opening chapters of Romans?
Dr. Adam Miller:	01:02	There's a lot to look forward to. I think Paul offers to us in these opening chapters of Romans, one of the best explanations of the gospel of Jesus Christ in all of scripture.
Hank Smith:	01:13	Wow. I've noticed with my friends who aren't members of our church, but who are devout Christians, the Book of Romans is vitally important to them. Talking with them about religion, the Book of Romans frequently comes up.
	01:27	I was thinking last night as I was preparing, that perhaps it would be difficult for this little church, we don't think of Christianity as a little church today, but this little group of Christians in a huge world of the center of the Roman Empire

and what that would be like for them. I'm looking forward to this as well.

01:44 John, why don't you introduce to our listeners, Dr. Miller. Maybe they didn't hear our awesome episode last year.

John Bytheway: 01:50 Yeah. And I'm sure they'll be excited that we have Dr. Miller back again. I'm just going to read from the back flap of his book Original Grace, which is one of the things that we'll be talking about today in the title of this book.

02:02 But Dr. Adam S. Miller is a professor of philosophy at Collin College in McKinney, Texas. He earned a bachelor's in comparative literature from Brigham Young University and an MA and PhD in philosophy from Villanova University. The author of more than 10 books, including Letters to a Young Mormon, An Early Resurrection and Mormon: A Brief Theological Introduction.

02:26 He served his mission in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He and his wife Gwen, have three children, and as we were talking before, Hank, we had Dr. Miller when we did the Book of Job, and it was an amazing paradigm shifting episode that was so helpful and so beautiful, and I just love the beautiful way he expresses himself. No pressure, Adam, and so we're really looking forward to this today.

Hank Smith: 02:53 Yeah. John, I specifically remember Dr. Miller saying something that shifted my point of view, and I've taught it differently ever since, is, "The commandments aren't to avoid suffering, but the commandments are what you do in your suffering to keep you close to God." To me, that was a life-changing moment and maybe our listeners are like, "Well, I knew that." But I sure didn't. I was excited about that.

03:17 Adam, welcome. Thank you for being here.

Dr. Adam Miller: 03:19 I'm so glad to be back with you. It's a real pleasure.

Hank Smith: 03:22 I hope everyone will go back and listen to that episode on Job, after they finish this episode, of course. I'm going to read the opening paragraph to the Come, Follow Me manual and then Adam, let's turn it over to you and give us maybe some background on Romans and where we're going to go.

03:35 This is what the manual says. It says, "By the time Paul wrote his epistle to the Roman church members who were a diverse

group of Jews and Gentiles, the church of Jesus Christ had grown far beyond a small band of believers from Galilee. About 20 years after the Savior's Resurrection, there were congregations of Christians almost everywhere the apostles could reasonably travel, including Rome, the capital of a powerful empire. Still, compared to the vastness of the Roman Empire, the church was small and often the object of persecution. In such conditions, some might feel ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but of course not Paul, he knew and testified that true power, the power of God unto salvation is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ." So with that introduction, Adam, what do you want to do? How do you want to get started?

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| Dr. Adam Miller: | 04:19 | Let's start with a couple of confessions, I think. |
| Hank Smith: | 04:23 | Okay. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 04:23 | Set the table here. Confession number one. I'm not a New Testament scholar. That's important. Confession number two... |
| Hank Smith: | 04:30 | Neither are John or I. I don't know if we've confessed that, John. Maybe we've proven it. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 04:36 | Once the confessions get started, it's hard to stop. |
| Hank Smith: | 04:39 | Yeah. It's hard to stop back. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 04:41 | And confession number two is that far from being a New Testament scholar, I'm a philosopher, which in some ways may be the opposite. I did write my dissertation and my first scholarly book in part about Romans, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, but I wrote about how those epistles were being used in contemporary French philosophy. So again, that's a very different cup of tea than the New Testament scholarship. |
| | 05:07 | Grace, though is my primary academic specialty, and I've even written and published a short paraphrase of Paul's letter to the Romans called Grace Is Not God's Backup Plan. That's meant to make Paul a little more accessible for us here in the 21st century. |
| | 05:25 | So I'm not as a philosopher, I'm not primarily interested in Paul as a historical figure, rather, I'm much more interested in the really powerful description that Paul gives us of the experience. Number one, of what it's like to be a sinner, and then of the |

experience of what it's like to be saved, of what it's like to be redeemed.

- 05:47 And on a personal note, I mean though I've spent decades now with Paul as a scholar, his epistles, and this epistle in particular have changed my life. I owe them a deep, deep debt for helping me to become better acquainted with God and experience a deeper sort of conversion. I'm grateful to Paul. I feel a great deal of affection for him.
- Hank Smith: 06:09 I haven't seen the research on this, but I have an inkling that members of the church in general, me included, aren't as familiar with the epistles of Paul as perhaps we are with the Book of Mormon, with the gospels. I personally don't know them as well.
- 06:27 John, I don't know if you'd agree, but I don't want to say we should. I'm not in charge, but I think it would be helpful for us to have a grasp on these epistles, especially Romans because it's so important.
- John Bytheway: 06:37 I think a lot of us, when we start Paul, in so many of our books and manuals, we have that statement from Peter. Paul's hard to understand, so maybe we shy away from it. But anything that's hard to understand brings also its rewards when you get closer to understanding. It's like Isaiah, when you do have a moment of illumination, you're like, "Oh." And then you begin to love it, like you said, Adam, you love Romans now and feel a debt of gratitude for this text.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 07:07 Pretty much.
- Hank Smith: 07:08 All right, Adam, is that all the confessions or do you need to confess more? Because we're here if you need to.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 07:16 Those are all the confessions for now. We'll see. We'll see how it goes.
- Hank Smith: 07:19 We'll see if there's more coming. If I'm doing my confessions, you'd ask if you want them in alphabetical order or chronological order.
- 07:26 Should we jump into chapter one? Is there some background that we need to understand of why Paul is writing to these people? Does he know them? Has he met them?

Dr. Adam Miller:	07:34	I think it's useful to remember that when we reach this point in the New Testament, we're kind of shifting gears from stories and narratives as presented in the gospels and then in the book of Acts to collections of epistles, to letters that are written to specific people at specific times and places with specific problems. And those letters I think are of deeply general interest to all of us, but their specific contexts will always matter there too.
	08:03	Let's note about Paul, that Paul in general, as Joseph Smith said of himself is kind of a rough stone rolling. Paul has lots of sharp edges that sometimes are helpful and sometimes are not. We don't have to think that Paul is right about everything to all agree that Paul is an apostle and that Paul is a powerful witness of Jesus Christ.
Hank Smith:	08:27	Yeah. I've often wondered Adam, Paul doesn't realize he's writing scripture. I don't think he thinks millions of people in the future or billions of people in the future are going to be reading these letters. Don't you think he's just, "I intended them for the people in Rome, that was my intended audience."
Dr. Adam Miller:	08:43	That's a great point. He did not intend for me and you to read them. He certainly did not intend for me to write a dissertation about them in the context of contemporary French philosophy.
John Bytheway:	08:54	But that being said, wouldn't we say though that Romans has, haven't we already said, kind of a really clear, a repetition of the gospel, kind of the doctrine of Christ?
Dr. Adam Miller:	09:05	Yeah. I think that's true. And this, I think especially of all the letters, because of all Paul's letters, this one is the least specific. He composes this letter sometime between 55 and 57 AD. He composes this letter probably as the last of the letters that we have, even though it comes here first in the presentation in the New Testament, because the letters are ordered by length, not by chronology.
	09:35	I mean, it comes first here even though it was written last because it's the longest and this letter is an unusual one because unlike the others, Paul is writing here to a group of saints in Rome that he's never met. The other letters that we have are letters that Paul wrote to people that he knew addressing very specific problems that they had.
Hank Smith:	09:56	And even individuals, right?

Dr. Adam Miller:	09:58	Yeah. But this letter he's writing to the saints in Rome, to the church in Rome as a kind of introduction, as an introductory letter, meant to both introduce himself and introduce his understanding of the gospel.
	10:11	So he intends it more as a kind of explanation to be read by a broad audience than any of the other letters, and in that sense, it's maybe even more valuable to you and I.
Hank Smith:	10:22	Great.
Dr. Adam Miller:	10:23	Two other notes in general, Romans is beautiful, powerful, and unusual. Paul is talking about the same thing as everybody else, all the other apostles, he's talking about Christ and resurrection and redemption, and he is preaching the gospel. But he doesn't always talk about it in the same way or use the same vocabulary as the other apostles.
	10:45	In some sense, Paul here is attempting, or at least he's contributing to the creation of a kind of Christian vocabulary. Trying to talk about what the gospel is and reach people who especially didn't grow up in the Jewish faith, and so it's kind of a work in progress and that's part of what I think makes it a little bit difficult, is the way that his approach and vocabulary are so unique and personal to him.
	11:09	The one other thing to note I think, has to do with the way that, in my opinion, the Book of Romans suffers more in the King James version than any other book of scripture. I think it suffers even more than Isaiah, when you attempt to read it in the King James translation.
	11:30	The King James translation is beautiful, but it is really pretty tortured and the King James English itself is old enough that I think it's fair to say it hardly qualifies as English as you and I know it. That's a pretty significant hurdle all by itself. Just in understanding Paul and I would strongly recommend that people seek out any number of contemporary translations of Paul's Epistle and just get a feel for what it's like to read Paul in English, which I think is very helpful, super-duper helpful, and then go back and worry about the King James.
Hank Smith:	12:02	If I remember right, Adam, last year you said you use an app called Blue Letter Bible, is that right?

Dr. Adam Miller:	12:07	Yeah. I do often use that. There's a lot of great ones, a lot of great free translations. You can consult multiple translations here and that'll make the work a whole lot easier, I think.
John Bytheway:	12:18	Here's what I have. I found this at Deseret Industries.
Dr. Adam Miller:	12:21	Nice.
John Bytheway:	12:22	It's a contemporary English translation. I think it's called The Living Bible, but it has all sorts of little helps on the side.
Hank Smith:	12:30	Sometimes when I go to Bible Hub, I like the Good News Translation because it's so simple. I know I'm probably missing some things, but at least I understand the chapter and then I can go back and read through the King James and say, "Oh, I get this now."
Dr. Adam Miller:	12:45	Yeah. It can help quite a bit. Let me offer a kind of what I take to be a kind of interpretive key for reading Romans, and then we can dive in and look at some specific passages and see how that plays out.
	12:57	My preferred guide to reading the Book of Romans is Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount. I find myself increasingly convinced by this wild theory that Jesus's own explanations of the gospel are the very best and that...
Hank Smith:	13:15	Wild theory.
Dr. Adam Miller:	13:16	Yes, wild and that his own very best explanations come in the Sermon on the Mount. There are three keys I want to borrow from the Sermon on the Mount, I think is the key to essential backdrop to making sense of what Paul is doing in his letter to the Romans.
	13:32	The first key is that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explains that God does not hate his enemies. In fact, God loves his enemies. God doesn't just love friends, he loves his enemies. Two in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus notes that we are also commanded like God to love our enemies and that in fact this is the very essence of the law as a whole. And three, Jesus argues quite sharply that loving our enemies doesn't destroy the law. It's the only thing that can fulfill the law.
	14:05	He acknowledges to his listeners that it may feel like he's destroying the law when he tells them that they have to not love just friends but also their enemies, but that really it's not

the case, that this is the key to fulfilling it. That this is what the law itself commands. And that I think is the key to understanding everything that Paul was going to say about what sin is, about what grace is, and about why faith is crucial to our experience of redemptions.

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| | 14:32 | If we were going to print up some t-shirts to go with this podcast, you guys do as you please, I'll leave that up to you. |
| Hank Smith: | 14:40 | followHIM clothing line. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 14:42 | On the front of the t-shirt here for understanding the Book of Romans, I would want it to say, "Jesus was right." And on the back I would want it to say, "Love is a law, not a reward." Then I think it will be my kind of mantra for understanding what Paul is doing in the Book of Romans that love is always a commandment and never a reward. We'll come back to that again and again. |
| Hank Smith: | 15:07 | Yeah. That was awesome. I love that idea Adam. Love is a law, not a reward. Okay, what's next? |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 15:14 | I think in lots of ways that's the heart of the gospel. The idea that love is always a commandment and never a reward, especially as Jesus describes it in the Sermon on the Mount, and this I think is also at the heart of Paul's own description of what it means to be a sinner, because Paul's description of what it means to be a sinner is that as a sinner we get the whole thing backwards rather than obeying God's command to love even our enemies. |
| | 15:36 | What we do as sinners is we try to use God's law to earn or deserve God's love as a kind of reward. We turn it around, we get it upside down, we get it inside out, we get the whole thing backwards. We try to use God's law to be loved rather than to love, and that I think is a good description in general of what it's like to be a sinner. |
| | 16:00 | A sinner is somebody who lives their life backwards in this way, looking for love, but trying to do it in this upside-down way where you want to be loved rather than doing the work of love. So you try to use the law here then as a way to earn or deserve love and be in charge of it, be in control of it because you are the one who's earning or deserving it. You don't have to depend on somebody else. |

Hank Smith:	16:25	I've told my students before something that can be confusing to them. I think it's similar to what you're saying here. I told them I don't keep the commandments so I can earn my way into heaven or I keep the commandments because I want to want heaven when the opportunity is presented to me, when Jesus says, "All right, it's open to you. Do you want it? Do you want it? I made the way." And do I desire that?
	16:52	The model you're saying, "I'm going to earn something, I'm going to earn God's, a reward from God." Can be motivating but also incredibly discouraging and also frustrating and also exclusive. You can start saying, "I am one of those that's earning. They're not one of those that's earning."
Dr. Adam Miller:	17:13	That makes sense to me because the I'm a sinner and that's how sinners think. That's how I think all the time.
Hank Smith:	17:18	Yeah.
Dr. Adam Miller:	17:20	I think in this backwards way about myself, about other people, I think in this backwards way also in particular about God, is if God were waiting me to do something to prove that I deserved to be loved by him instead of waiting for me to join him in the work of loving others.
John Bytheway:	17:36	I think we've been treated by other humans in that, I've got to earn this approval type of way and sometimes we take some of humans' worst attributes and apply those to God, which like you said is exactly backwards. We have to think in a whole new way about God is not using the worst attributes that humans have with each other. Sometimes we've got to earn or merit approval or love or we feel that way anyway.
Hank Smith:	18:04	And then we apply that to God.
John Bytheway:	18:06	We apply it to God, which we're never told to do. He's telling us all the time, the way he loves, but easy to do that.
Dr. Adam Miller:	18:13	Yeah. It's a little hard to get our heads around, which is why we can read the Sermon on the Mount or we can read Paul's letter to the Romans here and just not see what they're doing or saying because it's so counterintuitive. It runs so against the grain, right of our expectation is this natural men and women as sinners because we tend to look at the whole thing upside down and backwards.

	18:36	If you are anything like me, right then you may have spent the better part of your life trying to obey a commandment that God never gave. There is no commandment given in any scripture by any prophet, from any pulpit in any age to make myself into someone who is perfectly lovable.
	18:56	There is no such commandment. There is always and only and forever, the unconditional commandment to love even my enemies, even when my enemy is myself in the same way that God does and at the end of the day, a lot of what's at stake in redemption is just about my learning to stop trying to keep a commandment that God never gave and learning to start trying to keep the commandment that God actually did give, so that I can understand him and join him in that work.
	19:24	This I think is what Paul means by grace, at the end of the day, is that grace is the revelation that love always was a law and it never was a reward in the first place.
Hank Smith:	19:35	That's excellent. Always chasing after something that I already have. If I just stopped for a second then saw what the Lord is trying to teach me.
Dr. Adam Miller:	19:46	Yeah. And I think it fits nicely with the description you gave a couple minutes ago, Hank, of how the law really isn't about trying to earn your way into heaven, but that obeying the law, that's the thing that you're looking for.
	20:00	The law isn't a means to some other end. I don't obey the law to get love. Obeying the law is the work of loving, and by loving I've found the thing that I'm looking for, but I can't do it if I'm trying to be loved. That's not the right project. I have to engage in it as the work of loving others and then I find it.
Hank Smith:	20:20	And how discouraging that is to think God will only love me if I behave a certain way. You might think, "Oh, that's an excellent way to think. It will make my behavior stay in line." But really there's a fear there of, "I won't be loved, I'll do something wrong. I'll break the law and then not only have I broken the law, but now I've lost the love." That's a heavy load to carry.
Dr. Adam Miller:	20:46	And this I think is one of the ways in which Paul is among the most accessible of the writers in our scriptures because nobody speaks more clearly or more personally than Paul does, about how painful and despairing it is to live in this way that treats love backwards, that treats the law as a way of earning love and how that inevitably leads into a kind of trap where we both

condemn others and condemn ourselves and cut ourselves off from the very thing that we wanted in the first place.

- Hank Smith: 21:18 Wow. And John we're 20 minutes in and I am loving this.
- John Bytheway: 21:21 Yeah, this is great.
- Hank Smith: 21:22 This new way of thinking.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 21:24 Well, it's the gospel I think, or I'm trying.
- John Bytheway: 21:27 Yeah. I think so too.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 21:29 So I think the big picture structure of what Paul is saying in the Epistle to the Romans is essentially this, that as sinners what we do is that we suppress or hide the truth about God and his law by taking the whole thing backwards, especially taking it backwards out of fear, as Hank pointed out, right? That's kind of our motivation for doing it, we're afraid.
- 21:55 And by taking the whole thing backwards, we suppress or hide the truth about God and that what God is doing through Christ's atonement, through his death and resurrection is that Christ, that God is displaying the truth about himself and about his law, that he both loves his enemies and is willing to sacrifice everything to save his enemies, and that only that kind of love as law rather than reward. Only that kind of love, which is also what Paul calls grace can save us, especially given what it means to be a sinner in the first place.
- 22:30 So that I think is the rough shape of his argument in general, as sinner as we hide the truth and God through Christ's atonement reveals the truth about himself and his law, we could give one other image maybe to describe how this works.
- 22:46 If you think about God's law as a kind of tool or think about God's law like a telescope, what we do as sinners is that we turn the telescope around backwards and instead of looking through it the right direction, we look through it in the direction that makes everything look small instead of the direction that makes everything look big.
- Hank Smith: 23:06 Yeah. Farther away.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 23:07 If the law is love, what we end up doing as sinners is that we use the law backwards in a way that makes love look very small and far away. It's the same law, but we use it in such a way that it

makes everything look small and far away instead, it makes God look very far away. It makes love look impossible.

23:26 And what Jesus does when he comes to save us is that Jesus comes and he says, "Look, you lovable idiots. You've got the whole thing backwards." And he takes the telescope from us and he shows us how to use it and he shows us how to love and sacrifice and he hands it back to us and he says, "Now this is how you use it." And then when you look through it in the right direction, all of a sudden everything looks big and sharp and clear, and you can see God's love everywhere, and in everything is maybe a nice little quasi-parable to describe what's at stake here for Paul and his treatment of the gospel in the law.

Hank Smith: 24:00 Yeah. I like that. You're not seeing it wrong, you're just seeing it backwards.

Dr. Adam Miller: 24:05 Yeah, you've got the law. The law is right.

Hank Smith: 24:08 Yeah. You've got the right pieces.

Dr. Adam Miller: 24:09 But you're doing the wrong thing with it.

Hank Smith: 24:13 That's great.

Dr. Adam Miller: 24:13 Let's try to take a look at some particular passages then here in Romans. Let's start in Romans 1. I'm just going to use here for our listeners to give them a taste. I'm going to use the NET, the New English Translation of the Bible because it's a kind of simple baseline accessible, I think trustworthy translation of the Greek. The NET tends to be my default, but people can choose whatever they please so long as it's readable English, is the main thing to start and then worry about the details later.

24:48 So I'm just going to give you citations from the NET here and if there are particular things that we want to talk about or note in the King James, we can do that too. So this is Romans 1:18-20, and I'm going to tack on verse 25 here, these verses go like this and you'll see right away I think why as a philosopher these verses might stand out to me especially.

Hank Smith: 25:12 Okay.

Dr. Adam Miller: 25:13 So they go like this, Romans 1:18. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth by their unrighteousness, because what can be known about God is

plain to them because God has made it plain to them. Since the creation of the world his invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, they've been clearly seen because they're understood through what has been made." And then verse 25, "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creation rather than the creator who was blessed forever. Amen."

25:58 So that I think Paul, this is the first thing that Paul has to say in here in Romans 1. This is kind of the frame that he gives us for understanding the rest of the epistle is that sinners, the people who are unrighteous, these are the ones he says who suppress the truth by their unrighteousness.

26:15 The King James here says, "Hold the truth in unrighteousness." But I think that means hold down, because the Greek here is pretty clear. It's kind of hiding or suppression of the truth is the sense that's at stake, and then he goes on to say that there's something about God that's obvious, something about God that's kind of hidden in plain sight, something about his nature, something about his eternal power, something about his attributes that we have been suppressing and hiding from ourselves. "We've exchanged the truth about God for a lie." He says.

Hank Smith: 26:48 Suppressing the truth is that from ourselves? Because it sounds like, "Oh, I'm suppressing the truth from other people, but I'm kind of deceiving myself."

Dr. Adam Miller: 26:57 Yeah. I think that's right and I think that's how Paul describes it here too. We're not only deceiving ourselves about other people, but we're deceiving ourselves about ourselves. Because I think, again, as you indicated earlier, a lot of our motivation here is that we're afraid. A lot of the motivation at the root of every kind of sinfulness is fear that we're not going to get what we want, that things aren't, that we're not going to be in control or whatever, and that fear leads us to hide something that should be obvious about God and about ourselves from ourselves.

27:30 So we exchange the truth about God for a lie, and we take what should have been obvious and we turn it upside down and everything that should have been big and clear now looks small and far away.

Hank Smith: 27:40 Verse 25, Adam, you just quoted that. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshiped and served the creature more than the creator."

	27:48	Can you give that to me in simpler terms? In the verse, it kind of sounds like they knew what they were doing, they changed the truth of God into a lie like on purpose, but if I'm suppressing the truth from myself, this could be, I changed the truth of God into a lie and I didn't even realize I did it.
Dr. Adam Miller:	28:06	Yeah. There's both I think a dimension of self-deception here, but also a clear dimension of culpability. Nonetheless, we're doing something that's harming ourselves and other people and there's a sense in which we don't quite see how we're doing it or why even though we still bear responsibility for having done it.
Hank Smith:	28:25	That's what I was wondering. If you had to tell me, sorry to push you on this. If you had to tell me what the truth was and what the lie is, what would you say in this context?
Dr. Adam Miller:	28:37	That's what I want to address in the next verse that we look at. I think the truth has to do with the nature of God in particular, and it has to do with whether or not God treats love as a law or as a reward.
Hank Smith:	28:50	So I've switched it to, it's a reward, the truth is it's a law. I've reversed those two we've been talking about.
Dr. Adam Miller:	28:58	Yeah. I think that's right. What happens here, Paul says, they exchange the truth of God for a lie, they served the creation or the creature rather than the creator. We make the law about us and whether we are loved rather than about God and joining him in the work of love. It's that kind of shift in the purpose of the law and what we use the law for that's at stake in the lie that we're telling ourselves.
Hank Smith:	29:24	And one, it sounds like to me from what you've talked about here, that one leads to a wonderful outcome and the other leads to discouragement, fear and excluding other people.
Dr. Adam Miller:	29:35	Exactly. And Paul will spell this out I think in great detail.
John Bytheway:	29:39	I had been trying to figure out what the creature meant, and I thought, who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshiped and served, and my first thought was the creature was this lie, they created small c creature, the lie about God, they created more than the real creator. Is that another way to look at it, maybe? They serve this creation that they made more than the creator.

Dr. Adam Miller:	30:09	I like that. I think Paul mostly has in mind by the word creature here, just created things, by creatures, kind of King James language for the things that God created. There's the creator and then there are the things that are created, and the things that are created are the "creatures". That sounds a little funny to us 400 years later.
	30:30	But part of what's at stake here and that difference between the creator and the creature is just also again, the question of grace. Because what's at stake in creation is the gift of life and to acknowledge God as creator is to acknowledge that we are gifts to ourselves from God, that we aren't in charge, we aren't in control, God is, and that our lives are themselves a gift. A kind of original expression of God's own love and to deny the creator is to deny the gift that He gave to us as His creation.
John Bytheway:	31:05	I guess when I saw verse 23, I thought, "Is he talking about idolatry?" They changed the glory of an uncorruptible God into an image made to corruptible man, birds, fourfooted beasts, creeping things.
Dr. Adam Miller:	31:19	Yes. So idolatry is the primary manifestation of this reversal. Instead of worshiping God, we end up worshiping some reflection of ourselves in the things that we want or the things that we make. We make the law about whether or not we are loved, rather than making the law about whether we love others.
Hank Smith:	31:37	I'm going to go worship this idol or whatever it is so I can have its love, so this God that I'm worshiping will love me, give me value.
Dr. Adam Miller:	31:47	That's the very notion of idolatry then where my relationship with the God is about me getting what I want. That's what makes it an idol. Whereas if my relationship to God is about doing what God commanded regardless of what I want, that's actual worship, and again, you can see the same dynamic, where if my obedience is about me getting what I want, again, that's about whether I'm loved rather than whether or not I love.
Hank Smith:	32:11	I really like this idea of God inviting us to become part of his work of love rather than do, do, do. Works, works, works until you feel like you've earned your value. "You can now feel valuable because of what you've done."

Dr. Adam Miller:	32:25	Yeah. Where I think the kind of operative assumption here for Paul is that not only is it impossible for us to do that because we're not good enough, it's impossible for us to do that because that's not what love even is. It isn't even the kind of thing that you can get.
	32:40	Love is the thing that you join or do or share or make, but it's not even the kind of thing that you could passively receive as a reward. It's not even the kind of thing that you could deserve, and if you think that it is the kind of thing that you can deserve and spend your life trying to deserve it, you'll never find it because that's not even what it is.
John Bytheway:	32:58	Climb the ladder only to realize it's leaning against the wrong wall.
Dr. Adam Miller:	33:03	Yeah, exactly. Then our lives trying to answer the wrong question and then wonder why we can't get the right answer.
Hank Smith:	33:09	Yeah. And it comes into when difficult things happen, when trials hit, when something hard comes, you're, "What did I do? What did I do to make you so angry at me that you allowed this thing to happen?" That's our common way of thinking about it.
Dr. Adam Miller:	33:27	Yeah. And Paul again, I think is really good about this too. If I think that God's law is all about deserving love, then when good things happen, I'll own them and claim them and take credit for them and say that I deserve them, which will ruin them instead of treating them as a gift, but when also the flip side is when bad things happen, which also happens all the time. When bad things happen, I'll assume it's because I deserved that too, and if good things happen, I'll think I'll deserve it, and that ruins them.
	33:57	If bad things happen again, like Job, right? Then back to Job here, I'll think that I deserved that as well, and both are a kind of trap that prevent me from responding to whatever comes with the love that God commands. If a friend comes, I'm commanded to love them. If an enemy comes, I'm commanded to love them. That's the work, not the reward.
Hank Smith:	34:19	I like that.
John Bytheway:	34:20	It's funny, I'm looking at this list, really, "Whoa!" Type sins, verse 29. "Fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whispers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters,

inventors of evil things. Then disobedient to parents." Just make me, I could read that to the kids. "See this one? This means it's your turn to unload the dishwasher." Just because it appears in a list doesn't mean they're all equal to each other, I suppose, but it just sounded, it was kind of made me smile when I saw it.

Hank Smith:	34:56	That is funny. And then Adam, it fits right with what you're saying. Verse 31, without understanding it's backwards.
Dr. Adam Miller:	35:04	Yeah. One of the predictable effects of using the law in this backwards way is that you end up creating little groups of insiders versus outsiders. And one of the main things that you need to do to create your group of insiders is you have to applaud one another for what you're doing to make sure that everybody feels like they're being recognized and they really are great and they really have earned it and they really do deserve it. That's how you form the group.
Hank Smith:	35:30	And you keep each other in the group.
Dr. Adam Miller:	35:32	Self-congratulation society. That's a real danger, right? I mean, it's easy for church itself to devolve into self-congratulation society, though that's a kind of constant temptation to watch out for.
Hank Smith:	35:46	Yeah. And that's where we can be very hurtful to those who choose a different path or go in a different direction. We could, man, when someone leaves the group, you see it as a threat to yourself and so you lash out.
Dr. Adam Miller:	36:00	Yeah. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	36:01	The Rameumptom group was kind of a self, what'd you call it? Mutual congratulations' society?
Dr. Adam Miller:	36:08	Yeah. You use the law to create the enemy. The enemy is not the people like us.
John Bytheway:	36:14	Those guys over there.
Dr. Adam Miller:	36:16	Yeah. Those guys over there who aren't doing what we think they're supposed to be doing. And then we use the law as an excuse not to love them rather than obeying the law as a command to love them.
Hank Smith:	36:26	Isn't that what Alma does? He turns and says, "These are our brethren."

John Bytheway:	36:30	Yeah. In his prayer, it's a wonderful little moment because when he starts his prayer in Alma 31, he's like, "How can we behold such gross wickedness?" And then at the end of the prayer he says, "Behold, oh Lord, their souls are precious and many of them are our brethren." And it seems like there's a softening during the prayer, which maybe was a revelatory experience for him. I like the way that prayer seems to soften.
Hank Smith:	36:59	It reminds me of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Here's this Pharisee. "I'm so grateful that I'm not as other men are." He feels like he's earned his reward. He's earned God's love.
Dr. Adam Miller:	37:13	Exactly. In which case he's cut himself off from it. Let's take a look at Romans 5 for a second. We'll skip ahead a little bit.
Hank Smith:	37:20	Okay.
Dr. Adam Miller:	37:21	If in Romans 1, what Paul does is defines sin as a suppression of the truth about God, about his nature, about his power, about his character, even about his law, then I think it's in Romans 5 where we get the clearest connection to both the Sermon on the Mount and to Paul's description then of what the truth is about God.
	37:45	What is it about God that we've been suppressing? What is it that we've been hiding from ourselves? So what are we afraid of? If we look at Romans 5 and pick up in verse 6, "While we were still helpless at the right time, God died for the ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous person though for a good person, perhaps someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son. How much more since we have been reconciled will we be saved by his life?"
	38:28	So this, I think may be Paul's clearest description here of God's character and attributes that what characterizes God as the fact that he loves his enemies. He doesn't hate his enemies, he loves them and he demonstrates this love for them by sacrificing himself and his son. He gives what we need, before we deserved it, while we were still his enemies.
	38:51	This is both the expression of his grace and his own, and an expression of his own willingness to abide by that imperative to love friend and enemy. This, I think, this is the truth about God

and this above all is what Christ's atonement demonstrates God's own character in this way.

- John Bytheway: 39:11 In the King James version of Romans 5:11, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now have received the atonement." I didn't know this, but one of the commentaries I was reading says, this is the only use of atonement in the New Testament of the King James version of the Bible. I just thought, "Wow."
- Dr. Adam Miller: 39:33 Good. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 39:35 It's used a lot more in the Book of Mormon, but that's an interesting point.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 39:40 It's a good clue to something we're often not very sensitive to. It's a good clue to the way that we've inherited 2000 years worth of assumptions from the broader Christian tradition about what the atonement is and about how it works.
- 39:58 Where in the context of scripture itself, especially the New Testament, there's very little explanation that lines up neatly with that larger 2000 year long tradition and the vocabulary itself is a work in progress in the New Testament, as the apostles and church leaders are attempting to work out powerful and effective ways of describing what Jesus did to a great variety of audiences. And the fact that the word atonement itself is only used one time in the King James New Testament is an astonishing and remarkable fact, isn't it?
- Hank Smith: 40:32 Yeah. Our religious world centers on that almost on that word, and yet only appears once.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 40:39 Yeah. It's interesting, right? To ask what words are they using. If that's not the word that they use, what words are they using? What words are Paul using? What words are the gospels using to clearly describe this same thing to talk about what Jesus did if they're not using that word? That's a good question to ask ourselves.
- Hank Smith: 40:56 In verse 7, Paul talks about human beings will rarely die for someone else, but Christ died for the ungodly. Can you clarify that to me and then can I ask a question too, which is Paul saying the fact that Christ performed this great service was a vote of confidence to what? That we would eventually get it and understand and join the work because if he didn't think we

would ever get it, he'd be like, "I don't know if I die for someone who is probably never going to figure it out."

- Dr. Adam Miller: 41:32 Right. I think what we get here is another nice clear contrast between those two different ways of using God's law. The way that normal people work, Paul says the way that most of us work most of the time is that maybe we'd be willing to die for a friend.
- 41:52 If it's a really, really good friend, maybe we'd do it, but even then, maybe not. Maybe not. That's because we love our friends and if we love our friends, the more that we love them, the better they are to us, the more likely we might be willing to do that, but even in-
- Hank Smith: 42:09 In sacrifice.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 42:10 Yeah, even in those cases it's still, he says unlikely, you're still not going to be likely to die for a friend, even a friend, and then he contrasts that with the way that God works. God doesn't weigh in the balance whether or not you're a friend or an enemy in terms of whether or not he's willing to die for you.
- 42:26 In fact, God goes out of his way to do it for all of us who have positioned ourselves as his enemies by suppressing the truth about him, by worshiping the creature rather than the creator. So God does exactly the opposite. God doesn't weigh in the balance, whether or not I'm going to respond the right way or whether or not I'm doing what he wants.
- 42:46 I mean, I think he hopes, he trusts that his love for us can help save us, but I think it's clear here that he would do it even if it didn't save us because that's who he is. That's how he works, that's what he does. God loves friend and enemy regardless of whether or not the outcome is what he hoped for.
- John Bytheway: 43:05 That kind of goes back to the Sermon on the Mount. He sends his rain on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust. I think a lot of times when we look at be ye therefore perfect, if we look at the context in Matthew not as much in 3 Nephi, but in Matthew, it sounds like it's his perfectly loving nature, it's talking about.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 43:27 Exactly. Matthew 5:48 is not a commandment to make ourselves perfectly lovable. Matthew 5:48 is a commandment to join him in the work of loving perfectly and to the degree that I'm trying to do the first, then I am trying to keep a

commandment he never gave, and I will fail at keeping the commandment he actually did give.

- John Bytheway: 43:48 If you look at 46 and 47 before you get to Matthew 5:48, it's, "For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? If you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Even the publicans do that. Be ye therefore perfect even as your father, which is in heaven." And then you go, "Oh, he loves all of us. He sends his rain on the evil and on the good." I mean that's how I've always seen that is it's more about being perfectly loving then...
- Dr. Adam Miller: 44:18 That's the only kind of perfection at stake. The perfection that comes from joining him in the work of love, God will never ever use his law to decide whether or not we deserve love because love is not a reward. It is a law.
- Hank Smith: 44:32 I remember at a meeting years and years ago, Stephen Robinson from BYU was teaching and he said, "We earn things, don't we?" So he had us look up earn in the topical guide, it's not there. And then he said, "Oh, I must, I gave the wrong word." So he said, "Deserve, let's look up deserve in the topical guide." It's not there. And he said, "You know what? Here's a better word, merit. That's the word. We merit things." So we looked up merit and it's there, but it's only we're saved by the merits of Christ. We rely on the merits of Christ. There's nothing about earned, deserve or merit about us trying to earn God's love.
- John Bytheway: 45:11 You may have heard me talk about this before Hank, but I had a long flight from Newark to Salt Lake City next to an evangelical minister, and it caused me to come home and I went through every reference to merits in the index of the topical guide, and it was wonderful.
- 45:30 For me, it was, I'm smacking my head that I didn't have those ready, but we rely wholly and solely upon the merits of Christ and I think the history that we come from, which is kind of funny, you use that word, is like merit badges. "If I earn enough of these, I will get my eagle, but I have to merit that reward." When you use that scriptural context of merit, "We can't merit anything of ourselves." Lehi says.
- Hank Smith: 46:00 Didn't that minister say, "You believe in the gospel of something"? Is that the guy who said that?

John Bytheway:	46:04	Yeah. He said, "You believe in the Jesus of the gaps." And the way my brain works is I thought, "Well, I don't really know where Jesus shopped, but I don't think it was the Gap." And then he explained that idea of you think you do this much and Jesus makes up the gap, and that's when I heard, "Oh, 2 Nephi 25. He thinks we after all we can do, here's all this. He's going to do this." Which resulted in a great discussion and a great thing for me to go through those merit verses and it helped me tremendously to do what Stephen Robinson did to go through every reference to merits and see that we really can't merit anything, but we rely on Christ who and his merits.
Dr. Adam Miller:	46:50	This is a good point in general I think for trying to read Paul's Epistles is when we think of Paul's Epistles, one of the first things that comes to mind for many of us is just these kind of traditional debates that we have with our Protestant friends about grace versus works.
	47:08	Though for me, I find those debates to be very frustrating because they tend to assume, as a matter of course, the debates do whichever side you take, they tend to assume that love is a kind of reward that you have to earn. The debate then is whether is about how you earn it. Do you earn it all by yourself with your own works or do you earn it in partnership with Jesus or do you earn it just by Jesus?
	47:34	And that's a kind of spectrum of grace versus works debates. When for my part, those debates seem to meet to as the entire point of what Paul is saying, which is that love cannot be deserved. It is the law not a reward, and you join it or you don't.
Hank Smith:	47:49	And the invitation to join is the reward itself. The work is the blessing.
Dr. Adam Miller:	47:54	Yeah. The means are the end here.
John Bytheway:	47:56	I sometimes feel like we look at things like they're a formula for salvation when really they're more of a fruit of salvation. The feelings of love and charity for others are kind of a fruit of coming to Christ, not a formula for coming to Christ. Did I say that right?
Dr. Adam Miller:	48:11	That's good. I think getting the law backwards, I think means treating the law as a means to some other end, whereas treating the law as God does is to treat the law as an end in itself. And treating the law as an end in itself. That's what you call grace. Grace is the law as an end in itself.

John Bytheway:	48:29	When King Benjamin says, "You will not have mind to injure one another but to live peaceably." He's not saying, "Do this so that you can be saved." He's saying, "After you're saved, you'll not have a mind to injure one another. You will live. It's a fruit of coming to Christ." He wasn't giving a lecture on being kind. He was giving a lecture on coming to Christ and these things come after that. They flow from that.
Dr. Adam Miller:	48:53	Yeah. He is describing what happens when you look through the right end of the telescope. Everything looks different. The whole world looks different. Everybody looks like an occasion to love, not an occasion to judge.
Hank Smith:	49:04	And you're right, it's all too common. I'm feeling going, "Man, how many times have I got the telescope backwards?"
John Bytheway:	49:12	Well, that's the way so many reward systems in the world work. Like I said, merit badges. "I got to merit this many so that I can get this reward." And it doesn't work theologically the way we're talking right now though.
Hank Smith:	49:24	So Adam, as Paul is writing to these people, what's his hope with all this? Is he saying, "Look, here's who I am and here's how the gospel works"? Is this him trying to clarify something that they maybe had questions about? It's hard to tell.
Dr. Adam Miller:	49:41	My sense is that he means it as both an introduction of himself to the church in Rome, to the saints in Rome, but also as an introduction of his understanding of the gospel to the church at Rome, and that these two things are kind of part and parcel for Paul.
	50:01	He is the gospel. The gospel is Him. He's died in Christ, and Christ is in him, and to be introduced to him is inevitably in Paul's mind to simultaneously be introduced to Christ, and I think he's trying to prepare the way for him to come and see them and put them in a position to understand what he'll teach when he arrives and why they might welcome him.
Hank Smith:	50:22	Okay. Where do want to go next?
Dr. Adam Miller:	50:26	Let's take a look at some very famous verses in Romans 3 then. So on the one hand, we started off with a couple verses in Romans 1, where Paul describes sin as the business of suppressing the truth about God. And then we looked, I think at a very clear passage in Romans 5, where Paul describes the truth about God that, "Though you and I would hardly die for a

friend, God is willing to die for even his enemies." And that's how God works. That's the truth about him, and it's also the truth about his law in general, because his law commands us to love not just friends but enemies. This is what he's inviting us to join.

51:07 Then we get these verses in Romans 3, picking up around verse 23. In Romans 3:23, we're going to go through 26. Paul famously says, right, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but," This is one of the most important but maybe in all of scripture, "but they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." And then we get this, "God publicly displayed him at his death as the mercy seat accessible through faith. This was to demonstrate his righteousness, because God in his forbearance had passed over the sins previously committed."

51:55 Now, this is something that Paul does repeatedly in throughout Romans and in these verses in particular where when Paul describes the work that Christ's atonement accomplishes, he likes to describe Christ's atonement as a kind of revelation, that what the atonement does, as he says in verse 25, is that the atonement publicly displays God's true nature. It publicly displays how he's willing to sacrifice himself and present his death at the mercy seat, as a mercy seat even, that's then accessible through faith.

52:28 And this again, as he says in verse 25, was to demonstrate his righteousness. To show what it means to be righteous, to show how you go about fulfilling the law. This is what the atonement demonstrates because if the law commands us to love even our enemies, then this is God showing us how you do that.

52:48 How do you love your enemies? You sacrifice yourself. You give yourself up. You allow yourself to be crucified on their behalf. You die for them. That's what it looks like to fulfill the law. And in this way, the atonement saves us from the sin as a suppression of the truth by displaying, he says the truth, publicly displaying and demonstrating the truth about God.

Hank Smith: 53:11 Can you clarify? He gives himself up as a mercy seat, not giving himself up so we can go to the mercy seat, but he himself is the place we go to? Am I asking that correctly?

Dr. Adam Miller: 53:23 Yeah. The image here seems to be that God displays Christ at his death as the mercy seat, that's accessible through faith. The mercy seat, of course, referring here to the Ark of the Covenant to that space on top of the Ark of the Covenant between the

angels wings that are stretched across them, the top of the ark where God is, God's enthroned, the presence of God is enthroned there on that mercy seat.

John Bytheway:	53:49	You're still using that NET translation?
Dr. Adam Miller:	53:53	Yeah. That was the NET.
John Bytheway:	53:53	Yeah.
Dr. Adam Miller:	53:55	Verse 25 and King James says, "Whom God has set forth," Set forth, displayed publicly, "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."
Hank Smith:	54:04	It's not a word I use every day.
Dr. Adam Miller:	54:07	Yeah. No.
John Bytheway:	54:08	The footnote on the word propitiation says Greek mercy seat. So that's great. Glad you pointed that out.
Dr. Adam Miller:	54:15	And again, the purpose there is to declare God's righteousness. So God is demonstrating here, I think what the law is and how it gets fulfilled. Because the law commands us to love our enemies, and this is what it looks like when you love your enemies. The Atonement.
	54:30	It's probably also worth reflecting here for a moment on Paul's use of the word, especially in the King James of justification. Paul talks about righteousness and justification and people being justified, and it's a kind of bewildering array of terms here, I think in King James English.
John Bytheway:	54:53	Bewildering array of terms.
Dr. Adam Miller:	54:57	For what I think in the Greek is actually a pretty straightforward idea.
John Bytheway:	55:02	I agree. I've been bewildered of.
Dr. Adam Miller:	55:05	The nice thing about Paul's own language is that in the original, those are all variations on the same word. Every time Paul says righteousness or he talks about the righteousness of God or about justice or justification or justifying in Greek, those are all just the variations on the very same word that just means essentially to make things right.

John Bytheway:	55:25	Reconciliation.
Dr. Adam Miller:	55:27	Reconciliation is nice, but I also just like the simplicity of God's putting things right, with the emphasis on right here. Justifying things in the sense of when you've got a Word document, things are left justified or right justified or center justified, what they're lined up with. In that sense, you're setting them right in the sense that you're lining them up properly. And this is what God does.
	55:52	God's, the purpose of God's law is to set things right, to set things right in relationship to the law, to set things right in relationship to Him, and to set us right in relationship to each other. And the only right relationship is love. When we've been justified, when we've been made right, this means that we are now in proper relationship to God and his law. We're not doing it backwards anymore, but what was out of joint has been put back in place.
John Bytheway:	56:25	Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:01	Continue listening for part two, Dr. Adam Miller. Romans, chapters one through six.
	00:07	Adam, sometimes I hear people in classes talk about justification and sanctification and other big-sounding words, but I like that we're saying justification is putting things right. Sanctification, I think we'd say, making us holy. Is that a fair way to put it as we try to make this bewildering array of terms, or whatever you put it?
Dr. Adam Miller:	00:31	Yeah, I think that's good. Sometimes in contemporary discourse we like to make strong distinctions between sanctification and justification. I don't see a strong distinction between those terms in the context of the New Testament itself, or as Latter-day Saints, we like to make a strong distinction between salvation and exaltation. That can be useful, but I don't find that distinction at work in the scriptures. If we try to read that back into the scriptures, I think that's often not very helpful, even if it's a useful distinction for us to make in some cases. The same kind of story here, I think, with that.
Hank Smith:	01:06	I want to read you both a comment made by Elder Bruce Hafen, April 2004, General Conference. The talk is called The Atonement: All for All. As he's giving the talk, he quotes an Australian convert. This Australian convert says, "My past life was a wilderness of weeds, with hardly a flower strewn among them. But now the weeds have vanished, and flowers spring up in their place."
	01:35	And then Elder Hafen comments, "We grow in two ways: removing negative weeds, and cultivating positive flowers. The Savior's grace blesses both parts." He says, "We're not paying a debt. Our purpose is to become celestial. So we clear our heartland, we continually plant, weed, and nourish the seeds of divine qualities. Our sweat and discipline stretch us, and the tree of life can take root in our heart garden, bearing fruit so sweet that it lightens all our burdens through the joy of His son. And when the flowers of charity bloom there, we will love others with the power of Christ's own love." So it seems to be

very similar to what you're saying, Adam. When you join Christ in His work, the negative weeds or the suppressing the truth goes away, and in His work you are changed.

- Dr. Adam Miller: 02:31 I think that's right. To put a little additional twist on it, I might add something like, part of what happens when you are converted is that when you start looking through the telescope in the right direction, you see that the weeds have flowers too. The weeds also deserve your care and attention, as well. That life isn't just a bed of roses, but the weeds are things that we're called to love and care for. And that work of stewardship is the essence of what it means to be like Jesus and to live in love, finding the thing that we were looking for.
- John Bytheway: 03:07 That leads me to... I think of more of Paul's statements of becoming new creatures. Those weeds can become new creatures, even which... miraculous. I mean, the whole idea of baptism and leaving the old behind and walking in newness of life, it's reminds me of that. That's a really good way to look at it. Those weeds can become new creatures, or we see them differently perhaps.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 03:31 Yeah, I think it's a combination of both. We really do become something different in Christ than we were before, but it's also the case that what we were before we look at in a very different way.
- Hank Smith: 03:42 Not with shame.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 03:43 Yeah. Instead of looking at myself with shame and fear and a sense of condemnation, a fearful looking for the wrath of God, instead of looking at myself that way, I see myself as God sees me in light of His love, in light of both the good that I am and in light of the good that I still need.
- Hank Smith: 03:59 Paul, in one of his letters, is going to say, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it." And here you said that the Savior's atonement is this ultimate sign of love. So in the context of marriage, could I say that love is sacrificing for someone? Love your wives even as Christ loved the Church. And I think love, what is that? Sacrifice, suffer for, love unconditionally. Do you feel like I'm in line with what Paul was going for?
- Dr. Adam Miller: 04:38 Yeah, I think that's right down the middle. I think that's a bullseye. There's no quicker way to end a marriage than to think that your marriage is about being loved. If you constantly ask

yourself, "Am I being loved the way that I need to be loved?" Your marriage is over. The only thing that can sustain a marriage is the shared project of asking, "How do I love?" Because again, love isn't... It isn't even the kind of thing that you can get. It's the kind of thing that you join and you share, or it's the kind of thing that disappears in smoke because you thought it was something that it wasn't. You can't get it. You can only do it.

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| Hank Smith: | 05:15 | I'm really glad I asked that question. That was wonderful. John, anything else on Romans 3 before we go to a different passage? |
| John Bytheway: | 05:22 | No, not really. I think that Romans 3:23 is probably the one verse that we've all heard. We are all in this same boat. Pharisees and Publicans, we're all in need. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 05:33 | Yeah. Jew and gentile, insider and outsider. |
| Hank Smith: | 05:36 | That's what he says in verse 29. He is the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of the gentiles? Yes, all of them. He died for all of them. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 05:46 | Picking up where we left off in verse 27, I'm just going to give you the King James here, because actually I think the King James is better than the New English translation on this score. King James for Romans 3:27, I'm going to give you 27, 28, and then skip ahead to 31. 27 goes: "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith, made right by faith, without the deeds of the law. Do we then, he says, make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law." |
| | 06:32 | Now, verse 31 there, I think especially, a very strong echo of the Sermon on the Mount, where in Matthew 5:17, Jesus is saying, "You think that I'm coming to destroy the law, because you've got the law backwards. I am destroying the backwards version of the law, but that's not the law. Think not that I'm come to destroy the law," Jesus says. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. If you understood what the law was, then you would see that I'm not destroying it. I'm fulfilling it. I'm not creating some special exceptions to what it demands. I'm fulfilling what it demands. And what the law demands is that we love our enemies. And I'm loving you in that same way, because you positioned yourself as my enemy. |
| | 07:16 | The really nice thing I think here that we get in verse 27 is the way that Paul describes faith not as the opposite of the law, but |

as the law. We get the law of faith here, compared to what he describes as the law of works. And what you want is to live under the law of faith, not the law of works.

07:37 And the crucial difference between them, he says, he just puts it like this. The difference between the law of faith and the law of works is that the law of works allows what he calls boasting. The law of faith excludes boasting. What is boasting? Boasting is claiming that you have earned or deserve something. Boasting treats love as a reward. This is what the "law of works" does. The law of works, as Paul is describing this, is the law upside-down. You're looking through the telescope from the wrong direction, and you think the love is something that you can get, is something that you can earn or deserve. That's not it, Paul says. What you want, on the other hand, is what he calls the law of faith. And faith here is not a Band-Aid for a problem with the law of works. It's not an end-run around what the law demands. The law of faith is what God's law demands. Faith itself, grace itself, love for the enemy itself, is the law.

08:37 And what you have to do, Paul is saying, is that you have to stop living under what was not the law in the first place, a "law of works." You have to give that up, and you have to accept what the law actually was, the truth about the law, which is what God has just displayed through Jesus Christ, that you must love even your enemies. And this is called a law of faith because, unlike a law of works that's grounded in fear, the law of faith is going to require you to trust. It's going to require you to believe, number one, that God already loves you and He's not waiting for you to earn it, and number two, that if you join that work, you will find the thing that you were looking for in the first place, even though you went about it in a totally backwards, upside-down way.

Hank Smith: 09:30 That's great. In other translations he says, verse 31, it reads things like, "Does this mean that by this faith we do away with the law? No, we are upholding the law." This is the New American Bible. "Are we annulling the law by this faith? On the contrary, we are supporting the law." It even says in one translation, "Do we then by the means of this faith abolish the law? No, indeed, we give the law a firmer footing." So he seems to be saying, if we're going to rely entirely on Christ, does that mean we can forget the law? No, that is the law, is relying totally on Christ.

Dr. Adam Miller: 10:11 Yeah, that's totally right. It'll seem like... If you think that the law is about deciding whether or not somebody deserves love, then loving somebody who doesn't deserve it will seem like

you're destroying the law. But that's not it, Jesus says. By loving people who are my enemies, I'm not destroying the law. I'm in fact doing what the law commands. Grace is not an end-run around what the law requires. Grace is what the law requires.

- John Bytheway: 10:38 The Living Bible translation. "Well then, if we are saved by faith, does this mean we no longer need to obey God's laws? Just the opposite. In fact, only when we trust Jesus can we truly obey Him." I like the way that Adam said it better right there. It's not an end-run around the law. It is the law.
- Hank Smith: 10:57 Yeah. Contemporary English version. "Do we destroy the law by our faith? Not at all. We make it even more powerful."
- Dr. Adam Miller: 11:07 Yeah. Instead of limiting love just to friends, you unleash love as a law that includes everybody. The law becomes universal instead of selective.
- Hank Smith: 11:19 So, so far, Adam, let me see if I'm getting at least some of this right. I need to stop thinking of commandments, laws, as ways of earning God's love.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 11:31 That's boasting. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 11:32 Yeah. Instead, I join him in his work of love. Living the law becomes who I am. It becomes a natural fruit of me joining God in His work. And I'm not even joining God in His work because I want some future reward. That work is the reward. Did I understand everything you're teaching today, to some degree?
- Dr. Adam Miller: 11:58 That's the promise. That's liberating. When I no longer live my life under the cloud of fear and worry about whether I'm going to get what I want, which is God's love, but in fact believe what God asked me to believe, that He loves me already, and join him in that work, then I find what I'm looking for in the work itself. Then I'm liberated. I'm set free, Paul says, from all of that shame and fear and doubt, and I find myself empowered in Christ to live a totally different life that sees the world in an entirely different way, myself included.
- Hank Smith: 12:31 Yeah. Myself included. I really like that. I see myself differently, even my past self. We talked about that. I see him differently.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 12:42 Yeah. You see him with love. Is that past self your enemy? Sure, in lots of ways, but you see him now with love.
- Hank Smith: 12:50 Love your enemies. Yeah.

John Bytheway:	12:52	And grace and compassion and mercy. Yeah.
Dr. Adam Miller:	12:55	That doesn't let you off the hook, of course, from doing what is now needed.
Hank Smith:	12:59	Because you wouldn't actually be joining God in His work.
Dr. Adam Miller:	13:02	Exactly. Yeah. If you think you're off the hook, then you've misunderstood what you signed up for in the first place.
Hank Smith:	13:10	You missed the point, because the work is the reward. Yeah.
Dr. Adam Miller:	13:13	Which we continually do. Paul points this out again and again in this letter. We continually miss the point, because we try to read all of this as if it made sense in terms of the law of works, but it doesn't. It only makes sense if faith and love are themselves laws, not rewards.
John Bytheway:	13:30	It's pretty hard to miss in Matthew 5, if you read it in context, that he's talking about loving like God loves, it seems to me.
Dr. Adam Miller:	13:37	I think that's true. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	13:39	I want to read something from Elder Holland back in October 2017. Be Ye Therefore Perfect - Eventually is the talk. He's obviously referring to that verse in the Sermon on the Mount that we referred to earlier. "I believe that Jesus did not intend his sermon on this subject to be a verbal hammer for battering us about our shortcomings. No, I believe he intended it to be a tribute to who and what God the Eternal Father is and what we can achieve with Him in eternity. In any case, I am grateful to know that, in spite of my imperfections, at least God is perfect. That at least He is, for example, able to love his enemies. Because too often, due to the natural man and woman in us, you and I are sometimes that enemy. How grateful I am that at least God can bless those who despitefully use him, because without wanting or intending to, we all despitefully use him sometimes. I'm grateful that God is merciful and a peacemaker, because I need mercy, and the world needs peace. Of course, all we say of the Father's virtues, we also say of His only begotten son who lived and died unto the same perfection."
	14:46	And then a little bit later in the talk he quotes Tolstoy, and I was just so impressed by this. He talks about serving and loving everyone, and he says, "In that regard, Tolstoy wrote once of a priest who was criticized by one of his congregants for not living as resolutely as he should. The critic concluded that the

principles the erring preacher taught must therefore also be erroneous. In response to that criticism, the priest says, 'Look at my life now, and compare it to my former life. You will see that I am trying to live out the truth I proclaim.' Unable to live up to the high ideals he taught, the priest admits he has failed, but he cries, 'Attack me if you wish. I do this myself. But don't attack the path I follow. If I know the way home but am walking along it drunkenly, is it any less the right way simply because I am staggering from side to side? Do not gleefully shout, "Look at him. There he is, crawling into a bog." No, do not gloat, but give your help to anyone trying to walk the road back to God.'"

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| | 15:53 | I think that fits really well with what, Adam, you're teaching us, and Paul is saying here. We join God in His love and even his cheering on of others, once we catch a vision of God's love for us. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 16:09 | And once we catch a vision of our weaknesses, not as occasions for condemnation but as occasions for additional love and service. My weaknesses are not calling for condemnation. God doesn't condemn them. God sees them as an occasion for offering what is needed for the good that the law itself requires, for the love that I need to be changed and transformed. And we have to see ourselves that same way. |
| Hank Smith: | 16:38 | Yeah. And how refreshing that is to... Freeing would be the better word, free from shame. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 16:46 | It's the good news. |
| Hank Smith: | 16:48 | Yeah, it is good news, and it should be. What would you expect from a loving God? Good news. |
| Dr. Adam Miller: | 16:54 | Yeah. |
| John Bytheway: | 16:55 | That thing about Tolstoy, you get so fired up about the truth that you are teaching, and you sense it, and you get fired up about it, and you think that's beautiful, and at the same time you're like, "Man, I got to live that better." And I think we've all done that. You get, "This is so true, I feel it. I'm going to give this talk on ministering, but boy am I a lousy ministering brother." And I relish those, because they nudge me to do a little better, but I was thinking too, guys, when we're talking to young people or families that are out there listening, boy, our teenagers are growing up in a world of likes and views and swiping up and... Have you ever seen a young adult go on Mutual? It felt like a |

punch in the gut. I thought, swipe up, swipe down. I approve of you, I don't approve of you. Oh, I just...

- Hank Smith: 17:48 I don't like the way you look. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 17:49 I thought, I think I like the old way of dating better, even though I was horrible at it. But how do we help young people with this love when they are growing up in a world of likes and thumbs-up and approvals? This is brutal.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 18:05 But almost all of us are going about it the wrong way. We want to be loved, we want to get love, but you can't get there that way. You can join love and do it. You can't get to it if you're using love backwards.
- Hank Smith: 18:19 Yeah. Even when I think that you've taught us, join God in His love and you'll get His love, and wait, you're still seeing it as a reward. You're still seeing it as something that's in the future, that I need to go and earn. So it's not joining God in His work of love to get love, it's joining God in His work of love, then that is what you've been looking for.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 18:41 Yeah. If I'm John Bytheway and I stand up in a sacrament meeting and give a talk on ministering, and I think to myself, "I really need to do better with respect to my ministering," that's right. I really do need to do better. But why? Do I need to do better so that God will finally love me? Or do I need to do better because that's how I love other people? Again, that's the crucial question. I do need to do better. I'm right. But why?
- Hank Smith: 19:09 Yeah. And the why is crucial. It really is.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 19:12 Yeah. That why is the fulcrum on which the gospel itself turns.
- Hank Smith: 19:17 This is so fun. I could do this all day. Adam, where should we go next?
- Dr. Adam Miller: 19:22 So let's take a look at Romans 2:1. Here we get a really nice description, I think, that extends through most of the chapter, but as nicely summarized in the opening verse, a really nice description of the kind of trap that, as sinners, we fall into when we suppress the truth and treat love as a reward. Paul describes the trap like this in Romans 2:1. He says, "Therefore, you are without excuse, whoever you are, when you judge someone else. For on whatever grounds you judge another, you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the same things."

	20:02	The most predictable result that follows from treating the law as a reward, as something that you could earn or deserve, the most predictable result is condemnation. You start out by trying to earn or deserve love, to make yourself more lovable than other people, so that you can deserve more love than other people, which leads to your drawing that initial distinction between insiders and outsiders, between friends and enemies, between people who deserve love and people who don't deserve love, which means that that very gesture has from the start compromised God's commandment to love everyone. You've just drawn a line in the sand that guts this very substance of the law itself, by treating it as something that only some people earn or deserve.
	20:53	When you start out condemning other people, the inevitable end result of that though, Paul points out, is that you will yourself end up condemned. Because it turns out love isn't the kind of thing you can successfully deserve. And if you condemn other people to not deserving it, you will end up condemning yourself to not deserving it, and you will fall prey to that same judgment. And that's a trap. That's the very trap of a sinful way of seeing the world, is that everything will get darker and smaller and farther away, and that includes you, because it's impossible to succeed at the task that you set yourself of earning love.
Hank Smith:	21:32	The earning love hamster wheel. You're never going to get there.
Dr. Adam Miller:	21:36	Yeah. And this is also a clear echo again of Matthew 7, of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus's talk about judgment, where He says, "Judge not, for with what judgment you judge, you will be judged." If I'm using the law to judge how to love, then that's how the law will be applied to me. If I'm using the law to judge who to love, then that's how I will end up applying the law to myself again. If I try to live under the law of works, I will condemn myself to living under that law, but if I trust God and live under a law of faith, then I will be liberated by and live under that law.
Hank Smith:	22:12	What a fascinating insight here. Matthew 7, "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with that judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." And I've always thought that phrase meant by God. With that judgment you judge, you shall be judged by God. But that's not what he says. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. What you're showing me here, Adam, is, by you. You'll judge yourself, because you judge everyone else on

		that standard, you're going to end up judging yourself on that standard, and you're going to be condemned as well.
Dr. Adam Miller:	22:41	If you use the law to condemn, you will be condemned by that law. That's inevitable. If you believe God and use the law to love, then that's what the law will be used for. You'll have joined that project. You will be judged the same way.
Hank Smith:	22:55	Yeah. You'll be included.
Dr. Adam Miller:	22:56	These verses may be the most famous instance of the Joseph Smith translation amending the New Testament text as well, where we get this strong addition in the Joseph Smith translation that re-renders these verses by drawing a distinction between two versions of judgment, where in the Joseph Smith translation it says something like, "Judge not unrighteous judgment, but judge righteous judgment." So that instead of forbidding judgment, period, Jesus draws a distinction between two different ways of judging. A way of judging that condemns and a way of judging that loves. So that we get again here two different versions of the law, a law of works that's about boasting, or a law of faith that's about loving even your enemy. You have to use the law to judge how to love, but you must never ever use the law to decide who to love. One form is righteous judgment that fulfills the law, because it loves even the enemy. The other is a form of unrighteous judgment that ends up not just condemning other people, but you.
John Bytheway:	23:58	That's good. Use the law for how to judge, not who to judge.
Dr. Adam Miller:	24:05	Yeah. You have to judge how to love, not judge who to love.
Hank Smith:	24:07	Yeah. That's another t-shirt right there.
Dr. Adam Miller:	24:12	Yeah. Put that on the inside, I guess, when you take it off.
Hank Smith:	24:14	Yeah. That's great.
Dr. Adam Miller:	24:18	Keep that part close to your heart. In chapter four, we get a nice case study in the difference between the law of faith versus the law of works, and Paul uses Abraham as a case study. Abraham never boasts. He never has any reason to boast. He doesn't use the law to boast. He just uses the law as a way of being faithful to God's promise to Him and his promise to God to join in the work of love. In chapter six, we get Paul's famous and decisive and tradition-framing description of baptism as the work of undergoing our own death early. So in chapter six we get a nice

description, I think, of how you pass from one kind of law to the other. How do you achieve this transition? How do you pass from living under a law of works to finally believing in and living under a law of faith in Christ, so that the law can be fulfilled?

25:17 If we pick up in verse three, in chapter six, Paul says this: "Don't you know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we've been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so to may we live a new life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united in the likeness of His resurrection. We know that our old man was crucified with Him, so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For someone who has died has been freed from sin."

26:01 I'll attend a baptism this coming Saturday, and in our classic Mormon baptismal services, especially for children, we tend to emphasize the imagery of baptism is being about cleansing, where baptism is about being washed clean of your sins, which is I think appropriate imagery for eight-year-olds, but that's not especially scriptural imagery, and it's certainly not the image that Paul uses. Paul never talks about baptism washing you clean from your sins. Paul talks about baptism as a way of undergoing your death early, of expediting your death, so that you can die before you even leave this world, so you can get your death over with and start a new life in Christ. We're buried into the water with Christ, and then we're resurrected up out of the water with Christ.

26:48 And this he describes... This is the passage. This is how you move from one law to the next. You have to do the thing that you were afraid to do in the first place. You have to let yourself die. You have to stop being worried about yourself, and you have to care about other people. You have to let your own identity pass away, and you have to take up somebody else's identity as your own, here, Jesus specifically. You put down your name, you take up His name, and now you're going to live in His likeness. And to the degree that we live in His likeness, we will do what He does, which is love His enemies, and we will find the thing that we were looking for in the first place, which was love.

27:30 But it's hard. It's scary, which is why it's all about faith. It's all about trust. You have to do this thing that you were terrified to do, which was to die, to let yourself go. But that's what love requires. If you want your marriage to succeed, to come back to Hank's example from earlier, you have to do the thing that

terrifies you. You have to stop worrying about whether or not you're loved, and give yourself entirely over to the project of loving. You have to let yourself die. That's how you cross the gap. That's how you manage the passage from one way of life to the other. You make this promise that you're not going to judge who to love, you're only going to judge how to love.

28:08 It's a natural question to ask what this looks like as a practical matter, this business of surrendering self-regard, this business of dying to my own worries and my own self-concerns. Does that mean that we end up letting other people walk all over us? Does this mean that we allow ourselves to be abused? Does this mean that we stick with damaging relationships? It means, I think, that we do what's good. This is what love demands. Love demands that we do the thing that's good. We do what's good for us, we do what's good for the other person. And allowing ourselves to be abused is not good for us, and it's not good for the abuser. To love someone else is to do what's good regardless of the cost. In those kinds of scenarios, what love requires is that we don't allow the abuse to take place, because it's not good.

Hank Smith: 29:07 Yeah. That's excellent.

John Bytheway: 29:09 I'm glad you said that. I've noticed there are just a few places where we can find things like our sins washed away, even in the article of faith, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, but boy, I found in the Book of Mormon, the remission of sins comes by fire and by the Holy Ghost. It's more receiving the Holy Ghost is the cleanser, not the water and the font. And then maybe Joseph Smith talked about half a baptism, if you're baptized but not receiving the Holy Ghost. I could see that maybe they're all under one umbrella. I like that idea, because I feel like scripturally speaking, it's more the Holy Ghost is a purifying cleanser as the symbol, than the water in which we're immersed. Would you say that?

Dr. Adam Miller: 29:53 In scripture, we get these really nice descriptions of baptism as a kind of death, and we get these really nice descriptions of the Holy Ghost as cleansing us through fire. I think that's more scripturally accurate. Though again, I don't have any objection to describing baptism as a kind of cleansing, but it's not a very scriptural way of talking, for whatever that's worth.

Hank Smith: 30:13 I like that you said that it's useful for eight-year-olds. I don't know how to explain this to one of my eight-year-olds in the tomb.

Dr. Adam Miller:	30:19	Now you're going to die.
Hank Smith:	30:20	Now you're going to die. Yeah. So I like that you're saying, that's fine.
John Bytheway:	30:26	Even the born again thing, when I was eight years old, I didn't know that I was surrounded by amniotic fluid before I was born, and the baptism symbol was kind of huh to me, and I see it much more clearly now, that part. But Adam, thank you for the idea of an early death, because I know you have a book about early resurrection too, but early death in saying that the old sinful man is going to die, which is like the way Paul is describing it, now I can have a newness of life.
Dr. Adam Miller:	30:58	Yeah. Baptism of fire is a nice description too, because on the one hand, fire is nice, it's warm, it's comforting. On the other hand, it's a baptism of fire.
John Bytheway:	31:09	It's painful.
Dr. Adam Miller:	31:12	And to commit yourself to the work of love is to commit yourself to living in those everlasting burnings, which is what God's presence is like, is the everlasting burning that simultaneously, like the tree... It's like Moses' bush. You have to live like Moses' bush, where you are constantly on fire and being consumed, and constantly being renewed by God at the same time. That's a hard way to live, but it's also, at the end of the day, the only liberating way to live.
Hank Smith:	31:40	I've read verse six in the past, I think, in a flawed way. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him. And I always tell myself, that's what I have to do to the natural man. I need to white-knuckle it and just destroy this tendency. When through our discussion today, I think I'm seeing that's a natural result of joining God in His work, is my old self withers, that my old ideas about earning God's love, condemning others, that withers away when I join Him in His work of love. Is that a better way of seeing that verse, I think?
Dr. Adam Miller:	32:17	I think so. Paul puts a really nice twist on this image in the next chapter, in Romans 7, this image of dying and being born again, where Paul says, this passage from living under the law of works to living under the law of faith is a lot like what happens when a woman's husband dies. You're the woman, you were married to the law of works, your husband dies so that you're no longer bound to them, you're no longer bound to that law. And what you do in the gospel is that you get remarried, except this time

you're getting married to Jesus, and you're getting married for love. It's this beautiful image of the law of works itself is what dies, Paul says, and then you remarry here, in good faith, Jesus, in the law of faith. And conversion's like that. And you move from living under the rule of one law to living under the rule of another.

Hank Smith:	33:12	So the law isn't done away with, per se, it's your view of the law.
Dr. Adam Miller:	33:16	Yeah. The law of works, which is backwards law, it dies, and you stop living as if love were something that you could get or deserve.
Hank Smith:	33:23	Wonderful.
John Bytheway:	33:24	The last verse in our reading assignment today, Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." There's a parallel verse in the Book of Mormon, but I can't resist. I heard a comedian say, "The wages of sin is death, but after taxes are taken out, it's just kind of a tired feeling."
Hank Smith:	33:47	After you take out taxes.
Dr. Adam Miller:	33:48	I like it. That's great. It's what it feels like to be a sinner, that you feel constantly worn out, because the thing that you're trying to do is impossible. You can't help but feel despair when you try to earn love, because it can't be done.
John Bytheway:	34:00	You can't get there from there.
Hank Smith:	34:03	Yeah. You've traded the truth of God for a lie, and the lie is going to exhaust you.
Dr. Adam Miller:	34:09	Yeah. It's exhausting to be a sinner. It's literally exhausting.
Hank Smith:	34:13	To be under that mindset of, I'm never going to earn it. I'm never going to get there. There's a paragraph in the manual I wanted to read and get Adam's thoughts on it. It's under the heading Grace. In the manual, they do a Romans 1 through 6 overview, and they just talk about the law, circumcision, uncircumcision, justification, and then this paragraph on grace. You wrote that book, Original Grace, so let me read this and I'd love to get your take. "Grace is divine help, strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ. Through grace, all people will be resurrected to receive immortality. In

addition, grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts. We do not earn grace through our efforts. Rather, it is grace that gives us strength and assistance to do good works that we otherwise would not be able to maintain."

- 35:09 And then it asks us, as you read Romans, record what you learn about the Savior's grace. I like that, because it's a bit of a paradigm shift for some, I think, to say grace is the strength that gets me there, instead of grace is the reward once I get there.
- Dr. Adam Miller: 35:24 Yeah. Amen. Amen to everything you just said. And as I noted at the beginning, there are all different ways of talking about this. Paul's way of talking about these things is just one way of talking about them. And there are different ways to talk about grace, and there are different ways to talk about its relationship to works. I think Paul's is a very powerful way to do it, but it's not the only way to talk about these things. Though I think certainly the heart of what you read there lines right up with what we were describing through Jesus Christ, that grace isn't something different from works. Grace is itself a work. It's the work that I join God in doing. It's the work of loving. And if I think that I can join that work without doing the work, then again, I've misunderstood what the thing was that I wanted in the first place. God forbid, Paul says, you can't do it. To join God in the work is to do the work, and there's no getting around that.
- 36:18 I think that both we as Latter-day Saints and the Christian tradition broadly, we tend to get grace wrong in very predictable ways. We tend to think about grace the way that a sinner would think about grace, and the way that a sinner would think about grace is something that you earn or deserve, or something that you don't earn or deserve. Whereas at the end of the day, it's something that you participate in or something that you don't participate in. It's a different question altogether. It's something that you believe in and trust, as Paul says, or it's something that you don't.
- Hank Smith: 36:51 John, you've talked about this before about the order Moroni gives, "Come unto Christ and be perfected in Him," not be perfect and come unto Christ.
- John Bytheway: 37:00 The sequence.
- Hank Smith: 37:01 So is it come unto Christ, join in His work, that will create in you a new life?

Dr. Adam Miller:	37:07	The perfection describes the love, not my worthiness for being loved. That's what it means to be perfect, I think, in Christ rather than in myself. If I'm perfect in myself, that's the claim that I deserve to be loved. If I'm perfect in Christ, that means together we have joined in doing perfectly love's work. It's two different things entirely, two different goals. You can describe that same thing as the difference between loving perfectly versus the fantasy of perfectionism. Perfectionism is how sinners think about the world, where you try to be perfect, and thus be perfectly lovable. That's perfectionism. There's no such commandment to be perfect in that way, and trying to do that prevents you from doing what you are commanded to do. Perfectionism is a powerful form of disobedience.
Hank Smith:	37:55	It is, and it's all-encompassing, takes over your life, but you no longer have even the notion of going out and loving and doing the work of love, because you're so consumed in this... I've got to perfect myself. I've got to earn this.
Dr. Adam Miller:	38:10	Yeah. It inevitably leads, as Paul pointed out in chapter two, it inevitably leads to condemnation. You only use the law to condemn, instead of using the law to love, and that includes you. And it's a hard, hard, exhausting way to live.
John Bytheway:	38:24	I would never say the gospel is easy, but I think it's easier than what you've been talking about, trying to be lovable, and earn love, and think that I'm trying to get God to love me. Everything we've talked about today, it just leads me to want to jump ahead to one of these things that Paul says that is just so poetic and beautiful, when he asks the question in Romans 8, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And then he just gives this list. "Shall tribulation or distress or persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword... I am persuaded," skipping down, "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." That's a beautifully crafted thought. I feel like everything we've done is leading up to where Paul can say that.
Hank Smith:	39:28	Yeah. I'd like to make this a little more applicable to just Latter-day Saint life today, so I'm going to read a paragraph from the manual and ask you both a question.
	39:40	Some of the Jewish Christians in Rome apparently still believed that the rights and rituals of the law of Moses brought salvation. This may seem like a problem that doesn't apply any more, since we don't live by the law of Moses, but as you read Paul's

writings, think about your own efforts to live the gospel. Are your outward performances, taking the sacrament, attending the temple, and we could make that list really long, all the things we do as Latter-day Saints, are they deepening your conversion and strengthening your faith in Christ?

40:10 So why or when or how do we forget that? Because I've had conversations with people who... In fact, I just had one last week with saying, "I've attended the temple weekly, weekly, weekly," but she'd lost her faith, and she wanted to prove to me that she was doing all the right things to maintain her faith. She's going through a faith crisis. She's saying, "I've read all the manuals, attended the temple weekly, I've gone to church, I can quote to you the Journal of Discourses," all these things she told me she was doing, and it seemed like those became an end in themselves.

40:46 But comment on this then. Are your outward performances, such as the sacrament or attending the temple, and we could add a lot to that list of things we do, are they deepening your conversion and strengthening your faith in Christ? Why does this happen? Why does the gospel become a gospel of checklists, sometimes, to us? Because that's an exhausting way to live, filling in all the boxes of, I baked bread for the widows, I served at the cannery. And then to do that day in, day out, day in, day out, and then you think you're earning a reward.

John Bytheway: 41:24 Maybe we all have a little law of Moses in our spiritual DNA or something, or just the formulas of the world. If I do this, this, this, then this happens. That works in math class. What do they call it? The doctrine of retribution. I think that went over into the New Testament to the point that, as we've talked about, Hank, who did sin? This man or his parents that he was born blind? We want a cause and effect type of a thing.

41:51 The way you asked the question was, are those deepening our conversion? Well, are those the fruits of our conversion? The conversion should be our focus. We're trying to be converted to Christ, and then maybe those things become more of a fruit of our conversion, instead of a formula.

Dr. Adam Miller: 42:09 Yeah. I think, again, the decisive question is why we do what we do. It's exhausting to check off all those boxes on the checklist, if I'm checking those boxes to earn love.

Hank Smith: 42:26 Because I believe I can't... I'm not lovable, unless I do those things.

- Dr. Adam Miller: 42:30 Yeah. But if I'm checking those boxes because I love other people, it's not exhausting in the same way. In fact, it's profoundly empowering, invigorating, enlivening. It quickens. It fills you with a power that's not your own, with a love that you couldn't command in your own name. It connects you to God in a way that brings you back to life, literally. And the very quality of the work is changed in a way that's liberating rather than captivating.
- 43:00 I think that passage in the Come, Follow Me manual is really important, because it's tempting to read Paul and to think that when he's talking about the law, he's just talking about the law of Moses, which means he's not talking about something that applies to us. Now, everything I've said today assumes that that's not the case. Everything I've said today assumes that the things that Paul has to say about the law, the law of Moses, those things apply just as much to me as they do to first century Jews who are attempting to live now as Christians. I think that's true, not just broadly, generally, I think that's true in the text of Romans as well.
- 43:36 Again, Romans 2, when Paul gives us a whole bunch of examples of the kinds of things that are involved in keeping the law, he doesn't give ritual examples. He doesn't give examples that have to do with sacrifices or ritual requirements of the law of Moses or purity laws. All of the examples that Paul gives of the law of Moses in chapter two, for instance, all of those are moral examples that have to do with stealing or murdering or adultery, or all things that still apply to us, and he's pretty consistent about this, Paul is, that whenever he talks about the law and keeping the law, living under the law, he uses these moral examples that still apply. That's part and parcel of the way that the main issue he has in mind has to do with how, in general, we think about God's law, regardless of the details, whether I'm thinking about it as a means to earning love or whether I'm thinking about it as a means to enacting love.
- Hank Smith: 44:30 I wanted to quote a story told by Stephen Robinson. We've mentioned him earlier today. It's a BYU speech given called Believing Christ. He wrote a book with the same name. He says, "Sometimes the weight of the demand for perfection drives us to despair. Sometimes we fail to believe that most choice portion of the gospel that says He can change us and bring us into His kingdom. Let me share an experience that happened about ten years ago. My wife and I were living in Pennsylvania. Things were going pretty well. I'd been promoted, it was a good year for us, a trying year for Janet," his wife. "That year, she had our fourth child, graduated from college, passed the CPA exam,

and was made Relief Society president. We had Temple Recommends, we had Family Home Evening, and I was in the bishopric. I thought we were headed for LDS yuppie-hood."

45:17 "Then one night the lights went out. Something happened to my wife that I can only describe as dying spiritually. She wouldn't talk about it. She wouldn't tell me what was wrong. That was the worst part. For a couple of weeks, she did not wish to participate in spiritual things. She asked to be released from her callings, and she would not open up and tell me what was wrong. Finally, after about two weeks, one night I made her mad, and it came out. She said, 'All right, you want to know what's wrong? I'll tell you what's wrong. I can't do it any more. I can't lift it. I can't get up at 5:30 in the morning and bake bread and sew clothes and help my kids with their homework and do my own homework and do my Relief Society stuff and get my genealogy done and write the congressman and go to the PTA meetings and write the missionaries.' And she just started naming one brick after another that had been laid on her, explaining all the things she could not do."

46:07 "She said, 'I don't have the talent that Sister Morel has. I can't do what Sister Childs does. I try not to yell at the kids, but I lose control, and I do. I'm not perfect. I'm just not perfect and I'm never going to be perfect. I'm not going to make it to the celestial kingdom, and I've finally admitted that to myself. You and the kids can go, but I can't lift it. I'm not Molly Mormon and I'm never going to be perfect, so I've given up. Why break my back?'"

46:36 He said, "We started to talk and it was a long night." He said, "I've asked her about her testimony, and she said, 'I've tried and tried. I cannot keep all the commandments all of the time.'" And then he said, "Who would have thought, after eight years of marriage, after all the lessons we'd given and heard, after all we've read and done in the Church, Janet was still trying to save herself? She knew why Jesus is a coach, cheerleader, an advisor, and a teacher. She knew why He's an example, the head of the church, the elder brother, or even God. She knew all of that, but she did not understand why he's called Savior. Janet was trying to save herself with Jesus as an advisor. Brothers and sisters, we can't. No one can. No one is perfect."

47:17 He then quotes Ether and he says, "Of course we fail at the celestial level. That's why we need a Savior, and we are commanded to approach God and call upon Him so that we may receive according to our desires." He goes on to say, "I have learned this lesson in my life. My family has learned this lesson

in our collective life. Jesus Christ is the son of God. He is the Savior of the world. He is our individual Savior. If we will enter into that glorious covenant relationship with Him," which I think Adam would describe as join Him in his work, "and hold nothing back, and then have faith and trust in his ability to do for us what we cannot accomplish, I bear testimony to Him, I love Him, I love His gospel dearly."

48:02 That to me is maybe an all-too-frequent story of, I can't do it anymore. And Adam, I think you've really, really given us the answer here. Can I ask you to give it again, so we're clear, to anybody listening that that is not the effective way to look at the gospel? The natural result of that, you're going to end up exhausted, tired, and probably, "I can't do it anymore. I give up."

Dr. Adam Miller: 48:30 It's a really powerful story. I remember vividly, crystal clear, the moment I first read that story, and Brother Robinson's in the book, in Believing Christ, and I'm really grateful to Sister Robinson for letting him share it. And I think it's been really powerful for a lot of people. For me, I think the really important thing about that story is to recognize that that moment of despair that's described so powerfully there for Sister Robinson is not an optional moment. Discovering that you cannot do it, discovering that love cannot be earned and deserved, abandoning that project, giving up on that project, finding yourself hopeless in the face of that project, that is death. That is the passage. That is how you move from living under the law of works to living under the law of faith.

49:27 Now, it's a dangerous moment. It's a dangerous moment when you discover that the law of works is impossible. Because if you think that's all there is to the gospel, then you think that the gospel is over. It's also potentially a necessary moment, a potentially redemptive moment, because that is the passageway to discovering what the gospel of Jesus Christ actually is. That's the passage to discovering the law of faith, in which you discover that you were trying to answer the wrong question the whole time, that you were trying to obey a commandment that God never gave, and that you were trying to find love in a way that's impossible to do. And it opens the door then to being saved, to being redeemed, to being resurrected, to finding a new life in Christ. You can't get to that new life without dying first to the old law. And that's a difficult and painful thing, but it's also potentially liberating, redemptive. I think Sister Robinson would be the first to testify to the fact that on the far side of that despair is the love and life and hope that you were looking for.

Hank Smith:	50:30	So good. What I'm really hoping for this podcast is it's healing. It's healing for people to go, "You're right. I feel so much better."
Dr. Adam Miller:	50:39	Jesus was right.
Hank Smith:	50:40	Yeah. Jesus was right the whole time.
John Bytheway:	50:43	When I had that conversation with my evangelical minister friend, and we were friendly and everything, he asked me, "If you never go to the temple again, could you go to heaven?" And what came spewing out of my mouth, I don't know would pass correlation or not. I just remember saying, "I go to the temple because I love the Lord and I think He wants me there, but the temple isn't called the Savior. The fact that I went on a mission is not called the Savior. The fact that I keep the commandments are not the Savior. Jesus is the Savior. He's the only Savior. He's the only one with that name and title." And that helped me to hear my own self describe that, that Jesus Christ is my Savior and he is my only Savior. Maybe the things I do, maybe I'm trying to show I love him, maybe my motives aren't perfect every time, but I'm trying to get to that place where I just want to honor my Savior, who loves me even when I'm an idiot.
Hank Smith:	51:48	Yeah. I want to join Him in his work. Dr. Miller, before we let you go, tell us anything else that you feel like our listeners could really benefit from, especially from these chapters.
Dr. Adam Miller:	51:59	Here, I think, is what I'd really like people to come away with from wrestling with Paul's epistles, especially Romans. I'm not a sinner because I've failed to earn God's love through my obedience. I'm a sinner because I've been trying to obey a commandment that God never gave, and wasting my life in an effort to earn that love. Trying to obey a commandment that God has never given is what prevents me from obeying the commandment He actually gave, from actually being obedient. Trying to be loved rather than loving is what's trapped me in the first place. And discovering this, as Paul describes it, and as I've experienced it, is liberating. The revelation is liberating, to discover that that love, that grace, is a law, the law. Loving your enemies is the law that God Himself follows, and not an exception to the law, not a loophole or a backup plan to be resorted to when we fail to be lovable.
	53:00	That's redemptive. It's empowering, it's enlivening, it's a whole new kind of life, and it's a life lived in the presence of God, here and now, not just in the hope of something later. And I think

that's not just Paul's message. That is in many ways the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ itself. It's the good news.

Hank Smith:	53:19	Adam, it's been such a blessing to have you with us today. So grateful for your time. Thank you.
Dr. Adam Miller:	53:26	I love being with you. I'm grateful for the work that you guys do, and I'm glad it reaches so many people.
Hank Smith:	53:31	We want to have you back.
John Bytheway:	53:33	I was really looking forward to Romans. You can't just read it quickly like you can read other things. I really had to slow down and I still came away going, "I hope somebody can come and explain what this means." So it was a blessing for me to be here. Thanks both of you, and thanks Sorensen family for just letting me sit here and take a bunch of notes. What a blessing.
Hank Smith:	53:57	Yeah. A lot of people are going to feel that same way.
	54:00	We want to thank Dr. Adam Miller for being with us today. What a treat. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're going to do the second half of Romans on followHIM. Today's transcript, show notes, and additional references are available on our website, followhim.co. That's followhim.co. You can watch the podcast on YouTube, with additional videos on our Facebook and Instagram accounts. All of this is absolutely free, and we'd love for you to share it with your family and friends. We'd like to reach more of those who are searching for help with their Come, Follow Me study. If you could subscribe to, rate, review, and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find.
	54:47	We've just completed a new project we think you'll love. If you would like short and powerful quotes and insights from all of our Old Testament episodes, join our mailing list on our website, followhim.co, and we will email you a PDF of the first three chapters of our new book, Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. If you enjoyed our guests on the podcast last year as much as we did, we think you'll love this new collection. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, and Annabelle Chamberlain. We also love hearing from you, our friends and listeners.

Elder Hill:

55:26

Hello, I'm Elder Hill, and I'm a missionary right now in Peru, and I'm super grateful for the followHIM podcast. I love to start my morning by listening to the podcast as I get ready, and I find myself using the insights as I teach others and as I talk with missionaries. I'm super grateful to learn all sorts of amazing and beautiful things about the New Testament that I would never know without the help of the guests and the hosts. So, thanks so much, and God bless.

ARE WE SAVED BY GRACE, WORKS OR BOTH?



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|----------------|-------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 00:02 | Hello, my friends. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. My name's Hank Smith. I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:07 | Hi, Hank. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:08 | Hi John. Glad you're here. John, this week's Come, Follow Me lesson is in the book of Romans, the first half of the book of Romans, and it brings up an interesting question. Are Latter-day Saints, do they believe they're saved by works or by grace or by a mixture? How would you answer that question, John? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:26 | If Jesus did for us something we couldn't do for ourselves, then we're saved by grace. We've come to Christ and now we're invited to become like Christ. Trying to be Christlike doesn't earn us salvation, but He asked us to, so we try to become like Him. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:42 | Yeah, right out of the Book of Mormon, we rely wholly on the merits of Jesus. We do not do anything to save ourselves. We don't obey commandments, we don't serve, we don't do any of these things in an effort to save ourselves. Maybe some of us do, but that's not scriptural. The scriptures say we are saved entirely by Christ. So why do these things, John? Why keep the commandments? If I'm saved entirely by Christ, why serve? Because I love Him and I want to do what He has asked me to do. I want to be involved in His work. He's been so good to me in offering me heaven. I want to try to create heaven while I'm here. |
| John Bytheway: | 01:20 | Yeah. Those things kind of come more naturally as we learn to love the Savior and everything. It's not begrudging anymore. It's not like, "Oh, I got to do this." It just kind of comes more naturally, I think, as we grow in the gospel. So our friend Brad Wilcox would say, "Do you think you're earning heaven?" No, we're learning heaven or learning what that's like. Are you saved by grace? No. Are you changed by grace? The Savior's changing us and remaking us, and then I think some of those good works, they come more naturally. |

Hank Smith:	01:48	Yeah. I think it was Brad who said, it's like piano lessons. Your mom pays entirely for the piano lessons, and she doesn't expect you to pay her back. What she does hope for is that you'll practice, that you'll invest your time and effort and energy into these lessons that she has provided, not in an effort to pay her back, not in an effort to earn her love, but as a way to show gratitude, as a way to take advantage of a gift that's offered to us.
John Bytheway:	02:16	Yeah. I think it's a very good question and one that I hope people will go watch Brad's talks. I hope people will listen to Elder Hafen. There's so many who have talked about this and it's a good thing to talk about, but I think so often the good things we do just kind of come naturally as we feel the love of God and try to share it with others. It doesn't become a checklist or a begrudging thing. It just kind of flows.
Hank Smith:	02:39	So John, I would say, and obviously you and I don't speak for the church, but I would say Latter-day Saints believe they are 100% saved by grace. Why do we keep the commandments? Because we love Him, because we want to take part in His work. We want to live as He lived.
John Bytheway:	02:56	Yeah. He asked us to. "What manner of men and women ought you to be? Even as I am." So I'm trying to be like Jesus. We sing this song, but we love Him. But we'll fail in those efforts.
Hank Smith:	03:07	Yeah. We will inevitably fail in those efforts. That's why repentance is one of the first principles of the gospel. If it's one of the first, I think He plans on us.
John Bytheway:	03:17	Using it.
Hank Smith:	03:18	Yeah. I think He plans on us using it. If you love me, keep my commandments. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. John and I think you'll love what Dr. Adam Miller does with these chapters. So come join us on our full podcast and then join us next week for another followHIM Favorites.