



*“Overcome Evil with Good”*

## 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 being called to be a Saint change your thoughts and behaviors? Dr. Joshua Matson examines how Jewish Christians and non-Jewish Christians learn to become one people in Jesus and explores grace, works, and mercy.

#### Part 2:

Dr. Matson continues to explore themes of redemption, sin, the law, and the power of the Holy Ghost in the second half of the Letter to the Romans.

### Timecodes:

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Joshua Matson
- 01:40 Introduction of Dr. Joshua Matson
- 04:40 Background to today’s lesson
- 06:45 Emphasizing the good
- 08:01 Mapping Paul’s journey and what’s next
- 10:42 Paul carrying contributions for years
- 12:30 Marriage analogy
- 14:14 The gospel spreads quickly
- 16:30 Paul gives two introductions and reasons for writing
- 17:18 First introduction and call to be Christlike
- 19:14 Grace and loving kindness
- 21:46 Salutations and thanksgiving
- 22:18 What to do with these teachings
- 22:57 Romans 7 and Jewish law
- 27:34 Romans 7:8 and love
- 31:00 The law of Moses
- 32:32 What should worship look like?
- 35:15 Jesus elevates our focus
- 37:04 The Book of Mormon and the law of Moses
- 38:33 Paul mentions something personal
- 41:13 Who will be redeemed from physical and spiritual death?
- 45:06 Paul before and after Jesus
- 47:08 Where to locate additional Joseph Smith Translation (JST)
- 49:18 Writing is a difficult medium
- 50:01 The Spirit empowers our lives
- 53:31 Sister Nelson on love and marriage
- 56:09 The Spirit’s direction
- 59:17 Being spiritually minded
- 1:02:08 Christian’s true identity
- 1:06:02 End of Part 1–Dr. Joshua Matson

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Joshua Matson
- 00:07 Romans 8 and being joint heirs with Christ
- 03:14 The Atonement, glory, and suffering
- 05:22 Adopted by Jesus and being covenant Israel
- 08:10 Zealously follow Christ
- 09:51 Paul quotes Moses
- 10:28 Dr. Matson shares a personal story about an small ward
- 12:26 If we believe, we won’t be ashamed of the gospel
- 14:43 Paul quotes Psalms 18

- 16:13 What prophecies in scripture do you want to help to fulfill?
- 18:31 God has a vineyard
- 20:14 Being cut off vs broken off
- 23:17 Paul and Jacob parallels
- 25:41 Romans 5-11 Paul teaches doctrine
- 28:40 Romans 12 features commandments
- 30:01 Proverbs and kindness
- 32:19 Doctrine, teaching, and changing behavior
- 35:50 Overcome evil with good
- 36:04 Saints, governmental authority, and loving your neighbor
- 41:58 Paul gives a gospel pep talk
- 44:01 Marion D. Hanks addresses Romans 12-15
- 46:40 Supporting those weak in faith
- 49:17 *Nora's Christmas Gift*
- 52:34 President Nelson's "Peacemakers Wanted"
- 55:31 Dr. Matson shares a personal story
- 58:48 Five titles of God
- 1:00:19 Gentiles and Jews are inextricably linked
- 1:02:38 Phoebe and women as deaconesses
- 1:07:13 End of Part II—Dr. Josh Matson

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## Biographical Information:



Joshua Matson grew up in Chubbuck, Idaho, graduated from Pocatello High School where he was a varsity athlete and student leader, and served as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Canada Calgary Mission. Josh holds a PhD in Religion from Florida State University, an MA in Biblical Studies from Trinity Western University (Langley, British Columbia, Canada), and a BA with University Honors in Ancient Near Eastern Studies from Brigham Young University. In addition to his formal education, Josh is a former research associate with the Scripta Qumranica Electronica project at the University of Haifa and an Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls Scholar at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research focuses on the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Bible (particularly the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament and the Jewish Context of the New Testament), ancient and modern manuscript studies, and contextualizing the Book of Mormon in the ancient world. Josh has presented at numerous regional, national, and international meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature and frequently teaches at BYU Education Week and the Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium. Previously a Religious Educator with Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, Josh is married to the former Erin Barnes and together they are the parents of four children and reside in Santaquin, Utah.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with the Incredible John Bytheway. Hello, John.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	Hi, Hank. Good to be back.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	Yep. We're back for another week. John, we've been through the first half of the book of Romans and now we're going to take on the second half. In your experience with Romans, what are you looking forward to?
John Bytheway:	00:00:24	It's kind of like the second two-thirds. And I feel like we're watching Paul have the same challenge. We've got Jewish converts who have become Christians and we've got Greek converts who have never been Jews. And he's trying to get them all together and figure out how to say the law of Moses is fulfilled in the law of the gospel and how do I explain that and get everybody united, a major challenge. The more you're reading this, the more I think, "Yeah, this must've been really hard, so I'm looking forward to seeing how he does it."
Hank Smith:	00:00:55	Absolutely. Joining us this week is Dr. Josh Matson. Josh, what do our listeners have to look forward to here in the second half of Romans?
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:01:02	Well, I think of all the texts that we could talk about that Paul wrote that are equivalent to our day, Romans is probably the one that I would turn to first. There are so many parallels that Paul is going to talk about that mirror the challenges and situations of our own day that we can learn so many great things to help us become better Christians by following the teachings of Paul in our day, not just in Paul's day.
John Bytheway:	00:01:31	Beautiful.
Hank Smith:	00:01:32	I'm really looking forward to this discussion. John, why don't you introduce Josh to our listeners. They may remember him from last year.



John Bytheway:	00:01:40	Yes, we've had Dr. Joshua Matson before. We're so glad that you're back today. I'm really looking forward to this. Joshua holds a PhD in religion from Florida State University with an emphasis in religions of Western antiquity and a minor in American religious history. He also holds a Master of Arts degree from Trinity Western University in biblical studies and a Bachelor of Arts degree with university honors from Brigham Young University in ancient near Eastern Studies. That's awesome. He's been all over.
	00:02:11	While completing research for his dissertation on... Are you ready for this, Hank? On the status of the Hebrew Bible, Minor Prophets in the late second temple period, which we call HBMPST, Josh, he lived with this family in the Holy Land, was a research associate with the Scripta Qumranica Electronica project at the University of Haifa and an Orion Center for the study of the Dead Sea scroll scholar at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. That's amazing. And right now he is one of the editors in one of the volumes of the BYU New Testament commentary series, which is online. He's from Chubbuck, Idaho. He married the former Erin Barnes. Together they're parents of four children. He loves books, running, traveling, and sports, and we're just glad that you love followHIM and would be willing to come back.
Hank Smith:	00:03:07	Hey John, Josh, before we get into the material, I just want to give a quick shout out. My family and I were up hiking in Utah County yesterday. And as we approached a beautiful waterfall, we were sitting there gawking at it and loving it. Someone called out my name and so I turned around. I didn't know who these people were, but they are big fans of the podcast and they were happy to run into me and I was happy to run into them. So Dave and Julianne McMillan, thank you so much for listening and saying hi out there on the trail.
John Bytheway:	00:03:38	Oh, Hank and I had a chance to participate in a Nauvoo experience with the cast of the Nauvoo Pageant and I got taught how to do the motions and everything and run around on the stage. I met a wonderful young man named Russell Heaton. I wanted to give him a shout-out too. So thanks Russell for listening to the podcast.
Hank Smith:	00:03:59	That's awesome. We love all of our listeners. Really, John, I was telling the McMillans, they were saying, "Thank you so much for doing this" and I'm saying, "Thank you so much for listening." So thank you to everyone listening.

Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:04:11	Hank, If I can, can I just tell you what I love about this is in Romans, Paul is giving a shout-out to similar people, so I think we're doing a very biblical activity here, is being able to reach out to those who help move the work forward. So it's kind of fun to hear this and hear this on previous podcasts and think, "Hey, this is a very biblical thing to do."
Hank Smith:	00:04:31	Hey, that's fantastic. We'll keep it up then. Maybe we'll have to do it more, John.
John Bytheway:	00:04:34	That's what we meant. Yeah, that was it.
Hank Smith:	00:04:36	Yeah, we were very biblical.
John Bytheway:	00:04:37	Yeah, we're biblical.
Hank Smith:	00:04:37	We were being Paul-like. Yeah. Hey Josh, I want to read a part of the manual and then we'll kind of hand over the reins to you and go where you want to go. It says in the manual, "As he opened his epistle to the Romans, Paul greeted church members by calling them beloved of God who are called to be saints. He remarked that their faith was spoken of throughout the world, even though Paul then spent much of his epistle correcting false ideas, flawed behaviors, it seems he also wanted to assure these new Christian converts that they truly were saints who were beloved of God. His tender counsel blesses all those who struggle to feel God's love and for whom becoming a saint may feel out of reach." I know I feel that way a lot of times. "With humble empathy, Paul acknowledged that he felt like a wretched man at times, but the gospel of Jesus Christ had given him power to overcome sin. With that power, the Savior's redeeming power, we can overcome evil, both evil in the world and evil in ourselves with good."
	00:05:39	I thought it was a beautiful opening paragraph. Josh, let's send the reins over to you. Where do you want to start here?
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:05:45	Well, I think that statement is so good, Hank, to give us an understanding is at the outset, Paul is talking about the great things that he's heard about the saints in Rome. Unlike most of the other epistles that we're going to read throughout the rest of this year, Paul had never ministered to these individuals before. This is kind of a blind contact as it were. He had heard things. He knew about what those saints were doing in Rome and he had never personally met most of them. And so writing this epistle might seem impersonal at first. It might seem like he's just writing into the dark or into the void and hoping

something will stick with these individuals, but he wants to make sure that they know that the good things that they've done have been recognized by him.

00:06:30 And how important is that in our lives when seeking correction or giving correction to be able to start off with, "Hey, I've heard some really good things about what's going on. What you're doing is really good. Let's just fine tune some things." And I'm much more willing when those that are in authority over me come and say, "Josh, hey, these are things you're doing really well. Let's work on this." The manual with Come, Follow Me hits right on that Paul is wanting to emphasize you're doing good things. Don't be discouraged.

00:07:02 Again, as I had said at the outset, this epistle speaks to us. We might start to read through here and say, "Oh, I'm doing so terribly." But we need to go back and think of those words that we indeed are saints, that God recognizes that we have done great things and that we're called to be saints. I love the Greek for that word saints is hagios and it means holy one or one set apart. For me, I think too much of the New Orleans Saints, when I hear saints sometimes, thinking of it as you are holy ones, you are set apart. That can be helpful even in the most discouraging times when maybe we're not living up to what we're supposed to be, but that opportunity is still there.

Hank Smith: 00:07:46 That's awesome. So Josh, give us a little context here. What's happening in Rome? We covered a little bit of this last week, but let's hear it from you. What's happening in Rome and what is happening that's leading Paul to give this type of counsel?

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:08:01 Yeah, so the context, we're looking probably in the late '50s A.D. So, Paul's within the last half to full decade of his life. This is towards the end of his third mission. One of the cool things, for those who still use the old paper scriptures, you can flip to the back and those pictures that kept me entertained as a teenager in sacrament meeting, you'll see a map of Paul's journeys and missions. This is towards the end of his third mission, so that the big mission that's going to take him throughout most of the Mediterranean and all's likely in Corinth, which is in modern day Greece, not too far outside of the city of Athens.

00:08:41 So Paul's there, but he is starting to prepare for what's next, and, "What am I going to do next that the Lord needs me to do. I'm fulfilling this mission. Maybe there's some out there who have that same question. What's next for me? I'm turning one page in my life, maybe I'm graduating high school and I'm just getting ready to start college or just start a mission. Maybe I'm

just starting and getting married. Maybe I'm just getting ready to retire and I'm wondering what's next." And that's where Paul's vision is, is his vision is what's next and he's putting his eyes westward. So he's going from the Mediterranean region that he knows so well of modern day Greece and Turkey and the Holy Land and he's starting to look further towards Italy and ultimately towards Spain. We see this actually in chapter 15. As Paul is looking about all of these things that he's wanting to do, he says, "I want to come to you." In verse 24 of Romans 15, he says, "Whensoever, I don't know when, but whenever I do, I take my journey into Spain."

00:09:46 He wants to go to Spain. He wants to go to the far west. And not far west of Missouri, but he wants to go into the far west to preach the gospel to people who haven't heard it before. The gospel message has been preached now for about 30 years and they're trying to find new fields that they can go that are ready to harvest. And so, he wants to go to Spain, but before he goes to Spain, he says, "I will come to you for I trust to see you in my journey and to be brought on my way thither word by you if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go onto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints."

00:10:22 And so he knows that he has a mission that he needs to fulfill first. So he's in Corinth, he needs to go back to Jerusalem. Why? Verse 26, "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, that's modern-day Turkey to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. Here in Romans 15:26, Paul talks about the fact that he has gone through Greece and Turkey, modern day Greece and Turkey, and he's received contributions for the poor that are in Jerusalem. That was his original mission that was given to him at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:26 and 27.

00:11:04 So if we go back to there, we know that that's it. This is six or seven years later. I am not very good at keeping my money in my pocket for six or seven minutes, let alone six or seven years.

Hank Smith: 00:11:14 Thank goodness.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:11:15 But Paul has been receiving these contributions on his mission and he recognizes the sacredness of the funds that he's received. He says, "I need to go back from Corinth to Jerusalem to make sure that I deliver those contributions to those to whom they were made. And then I want to come to you, I want to come to Rome and then I want to go to Spain." But for the astute student of these texts, you'll know that that's not how Paul ends up going to Rome. Paul is going to end up going to

Rome as it were in chains as a prisoner as he appeals to Caesar because of the opposition that he's facing.

00:11:51 And so I know that's kind of a lengthy history lesson of where Paul's been and where he is going, but when we know that context that he's writing to Roman Saints that he doesn't know, the question I always ask is why is he writing to the Romans. If he's never been there, if he doesn't know them like the other epistles he's talking to friends that he converted and possibly we know from Acts baptized, why is he writing to these individuals? And we said it at the outset, it's because of their faith, but it's also because of a major issue that is continually causing problems for the moving forward of the work, the gathering of Israel. And that's trying to bring together those who come from a Jewish background into Christianity and those who come from a Christian background into Christianity.

00:12:37 And Paul says it best, and maybe this is how we jump into the text from that introduction, is if we go to Romans 7 where our block starts this week in Come, Follow Me, Paul compares what's happening in the church to marriage. And so this marriage analogy, at first you might sit there and go, "Wait a second, we're talking about divorce. So are the Jews being divorced from Judaism and then becoming Christians and the Gentiles divorcing?" I don't think that's what Paul's trying to say. I think of it more in light of my own marriage or the marriage of many of our listeners. How many of us came into a marriage not fully understanding the background that our spouses had in their lives?

00:13:19 I think this is exemplified by a coworker. We were talking recently and they said, "I didn't know that in my husband's family, they always go to Lake Powell on Christmas." There's a lot of contention about, "Well, do we go to Lake Powell or do we not go to Lake Powell for Christmas because my family has its own traditions?" And that's what I think Paul is trying to get at, is those who have come into Christianity, no matter what their background, they're intermingling with people who have different backgrounds and are coming with different traditions, understandings and knowledge. And in Rome, that is at the forefront of what's causing the church to stumble, is because people from one background are fighting with those of another background and Paul's trying to act as it were as a mediator to be able to say, "No, we are all Christians. We're going to make this work. Divorce is not an option. We need to find out how we're going to become the best that we can become."

Hank Smith:	00:14:14	Is there any evidence or anything we can point to where Paul got this information about the Romans? Is it from his friends, Priscilla and Aquila, who I think who had lived in Rome previous?
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:14:26	Yeah, so this is such a great question, Hank. As I think about it this way, as the church is growing, we don't have leaders who are being set to be able to overwatch what's happening. A great example of this we actually see in Thessalonians because from the evidence in the text, Paul was only in Thessalonica probably only three weeks and he's preaching the gospel and he's baptizing and then he's forced out of town. So then the question becomes, "Well, what happened-"
Hank Smith:	00:14:53	They're on their own.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:14:53	Exactly. Word's going to get around and people are going to travel through. Well, not to overuse the phrase, "All roads lead to Rome," but as Christians are traveling and as news is traveling, we don't have a ton of information about who actually converted most of these Christians. Some of them may have been displaced from other areas where Christianity had already been preached by Paul on his previous two missions, and that as the Roman Empire is moving people from the holy land to Italy to Rome as they're moving people from other places, you've got people who are converted Christians and now they're living in Rome.
	00:15:29	You've got Jews all the way starting in the mid-second century BC who are being moved to Rome because of rebellions or are immigrating to Rome for opportunities. And then they're hearing about this stuff about Jesus and they're becoming interested and they're hearing from friends that are coming, "Hey, come to my church service because we don't have real churches. We're meeting in houses. So come. And if you love what you hear, then become Christian." We don't have a ton of background of where that is, but because of Christianity spread and Paul's travels and intermingling and that long list of individuals that I hope will get a chance to talk about in chapter 16, Paul is obviously aware of people that are there, but maybe they're people that he had converted along in the way that are now in Rome and are trying to do the best in a church that doesn't have an infrastructure to succeed.
Hank Smith:	00:16:20	I read somewhere also that in Acts chapter 2 at the day of Pentecost, there's visitors from Rome that have that experience with Peter, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

	00:16:31	"Repent and be baptized." So perhaps there were some who were at the day of Pentecost experience and went back to Rome.
John Bytheway:	00:16:39	All right Josh, what do you want to do next?
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:16:40	So I think if we jump in, one of the things that Paul's going to do is he gives two introductions to what he's trying to emphasize to the Roman saints. One introduction is in Romans 1 verses 7 and 8 in the introduction and a second one is in Romans chapter 15 verses 14 through 33. It's almost like hiding the thesis at the end of the book. At the end he's going to talk about some of those reasons of why he's writing. And so I think looking at both of those will help to illustrate what we'll talk about then as we go through chapters 7 through 16.
	00:17:17	So looking first at Romans chapter 1 verses 7 and 8, he says this, "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," and we talked about that word meaning holy ones or being set apart, "grace to you and the peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Now here in verse 7, we get a word that can sometimes be complicated and carry a lot of baggage in religious tradition, which is this word grace. One of the things from a linguistic point of view is that the word here in Greek is charis and it means loving kindness. This grace that comes is a loving kindness from our Savior Jesus Christ. And that's going to be so vital as we read the rest of Romans because Paul's emphasis to the saints is you need to be more like the Savior. Where is your grace or where is your loving kindness that is intended to be given to others?
	00:18:16	There's a great definition for loving kindness in one of the linguistic dictionaries that I use and it says this, that charis means a benefactor who gives something that cannot be repaid. Clients repay through faithfulness and good deeds. The grace, the loving kindness that's being given by Jesus Christ in this statement and through his atoning sacrifice we can never repay. But what he expects us to do is to have faithfulness and to perform good deeds, not necessarily just in our own private lives, but especially in the lives of our neighbors. So coming to those two great commandments, to love God and love our neighbor, that's what Paul is going to try and emphasize and we will come back to that again and again as we look at chapter 7 through 16 is, "Where is your loving kindness to your neighbor? Where is your charis?"
Hank Smith:	00:19:13	I'm grateful we're talking about this. I think you're right that word grace can be a loaded word in religious context, right?

Someone's maybe had an experience in an argumentative type way, saved by grace or saved by works. And so when they see the word grace, they might be turned away where you're saying don't turn away from that word. It's actually a word that we can love. It's a word we can incorporate into our religious vocabulary.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:19:38 Yeah, James will talk about this in James chapter 2 in his epistle. But faith and works, I love the analogy that was given in the old Institute manual that faith and works are like two oars that you're using while rowing a canoe. You can't just use one because you'll spin in circles. They both work hand in hand together. And so, being able to understand what that grace is, it's something we can never repay, we can never work back, but that there is an expectation on our part to live up to that grace that we've received by being faithful and by doing good works.

John Bytheway: 00:20:13 Another example that I love. CS Lewis used in Mere Christianity on the one I have, page 129, he said, "Christians have often disputed as to whether what leads the Christian home is good actions or faith in Christ." Kind of a works grace thing. "I have no right really to speak on such a difficult question, but it does seem to me like asking which blade in a pair of scissors is most necessary." I love that one because you need them both. And to have CS Lewis say that, I think, is wonderful.

Hank Smith: 00:20:45 I'd never heard that. Thanks, John.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:20:47 John, another reason I love what you're saying is that's the exact problem that Paul is facing with the Roman saints. You have the Jewish Christians who are coming from a very law heavy Torah observant lifestyle and you've got the Gentile Christians who actually may be coming from a life where they were doing things or participating in things and now they're simply recognizing "I am freed by Jesus Christ from those old ways, that old self." There's a reason why the first few chapters of Romans are so focused on this idea of law and works, grace, and mercy. How do these work together? One of the hard parts of what we're trying to do today is that the division for Come, Follow Me is right in the middle of Paul's doctrinal exposition on these ideas.

00:21:37 One of the cool things about studying Paul, and we'll see this as we go through all the epistles through the rest of the year, is Paul's format is very predictable. He opens with the salutation, he then gives a thanksgiving to those that he's writing to, and then he has two parts in the body of every epistle. The first part is the doctrinal exposition and then the second part is a



hortatory or a, "Therefore what are you supposed to do because of what you've just learned?" Chapter 7 finds us right in the middle of that doctrinal discussion. And then once we get to chapter 12, we'll get to the point where it's now what do you do with it? How do you live your life with it?

00:22:17 As you study the epistles, if you can find those divisions, there's great resources that are available online to be able to see how these epistles are broken down. You can look and see, "Okay, here's the part where he is talking about doctrine that helps me to understand why I'm studying what I'm studying. And then I'm getting to the point where he's saying, this is what you're supposed to do with it." And so, you almost see a little bit of that, that both are important. You have to understand the doctrine, you have to understand what to do, and he's trying to balance it with both a group of people who are law heavy and a group of people that are maybe a little more grace heavy because they didn't know anything different except Jesus in their religious lives.

Hank Smith: 00:22:55 Awesome. All right, I think you've set us up great here, Josh. Let's jump into chapter 7 and see where Paul takes us.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:23:02 Awesome. So we've made reference to this a moment ago. Paul's going to start... And one of the hard parts of studying Romans 7 through 16 is sometimes he uses code names for the people that he's talking about, and we can see that in verse 1. So starting in Romans 7:1, "Know ye not brethren," Okay, who's this brethren that we're talking to? "For I speak to them that know the law." If you're not quite familiar with his audience, you won't know that here he's talking to those who are Jewish Christians. It's kind of like keeping track of a dialogue. Okay, so he now is addressing Jewish Christians in Rome. One of the other ways that we can tell that this is his focus is especially when we get to chapter 8 and 9, he's going to use a ton of Old Testament references. So he's focusing on, "Now I'm going to speak specifically to you that know the law" and we need to read chapter 7 through that lens.

00:23:57 We're talking to Jewish Christians who have a loaded background of, "We're supposed to follow the law. The law is our way to salvation. We have to live the law. We have to do the things of the law." So there's our focus. His question in verse 1, "How that the law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" Now this question's fascinating to me because it emphasizes the temporal nature of the law that when you're in life, during your life, the law is what is over you. And Paul is then going to give kind of a scene that nobody really wants to

have to face in verse 2, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by law to her husband so long as he liveth. But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband."

00:24:47 We're getting this idea that I'm going to set up what it's like to be a Jewish Christian by talking about who your spouse is. Referring to the Jewish law here, the woman was free to be able to marry again after her husband died. Now, Paul knows that this is a complicated situation because somebody's going to read that and say, "Are you telling me the law is dead?"

Hank Smith: 00:25:12 That's automatically what I thought, is he's saying, "And now the law is dead so we can remarry into this New Testament, this new law."

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:25:20 Yeah. And imagine what that would be received as and say, "Whoa, wait a second. No, I grew up with the law. This is everything that I did in my life. Are you saying all of my years with the law were wasted?" Paul then has to say, "But I need to give some clarification." So he's not saying that the law is dead, but that it served a purpose. And that's where he's going to go with it in verse 4 of Romans chapter 7, "Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law." It's not the law that has died. It's the individual who has died as pertaining to the law.

00:25:59 And that sounds a little convoluted because you're going, "Wait a second. What? How does that relate?" It relates because he says this, "By the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another." So why are you leaving the law? You're not leaving the law because the law doesn't have a purpose and that it wasn't good. You're leaving the law because Christ has now asked you to, because he's given you a new law, a new commandment, and that that is the focus of what your life should be now. Your focus is now the new law that Jesus Christ has given. And because Christ came and died, you are dead to the old law and you're now expected to follow the new one.

00:26:44 Now, the reason I want to say it that way is because we get a lot of 2 Nephi 9 feelings in verse 7. So we jump down to Romans 7:7 when he says this, "What shall we say then? Is the law a sin or is the law dead?" God forbid. Now, the Joseph Smith translation helps us a lot here where the Greek is more, "May it be not or may it not be." An emphatic statement of, "No, that's not how it should be. But, I had not known sin but by the law. For had I not known lust except the law had said thou shalt not covet." So there in verse 7, we see that the law is connected to our knowledge of what is right and what's wrong, and that's

		going to be reemphasized in verse 8. John, if you want to go ahead and read verse 8.
John Bytheway:	00:27:33	Okay, "But sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, for without the law, sin was dead."
Hank Smith:	00:27:43	Wow. John, good job on that by the way. On concupiscence.
John Bytheway:	00:27:45	Concupiscence. I don't know what that is.
Hank Smith:	00:27:50	Wow.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:27:50	Say that 10 times in a row.
John Bytheway:	00:27:52	But it wrought in Paul all manner of it, whatever it is. What's...
Hank Smith:	00:27:56	Okay, I get it. Josh is going to tell us what it is.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:28:00	I'm not going to do it from the English standpoint because I am not great at King James English either, but I'll go to the Greek. The Greek here is tying it back to verse 7, where if I was translating it from the Greek, I'd say it had wrought in me all manner of covetousness."
Hank Smith:	00:28:15	Oh.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:28:16	So this word is talking about coveting or the coveting. "For without the law, sin was dead." If you read this a few times, it gives you a little bit of a headache because you're going, "Okay, we're talking about law and sin. And with the law, we have sin, but without the law, sin is dead." What does that mean? This is a wonderful place to go to 2 Nephi chapter 9, verses 25 and 26. In the Book of Mormon, we're able to see Jacob's commentary that helps us better understand what Paul is trying to say to the Roman saints. So here in 2 Nephi 9:25 and 26, we read this. "Wherefore he has given a law. And where there is no law given there is no punishment. And where there is no punishment, there is no condemnation. And where there is no condemnation, the mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them because of the atonement, for they are delivered by the power of him."
	00:29:15	What Paul's trying to say in these verses is that Jacob told the ancient Nephites is, "If you don't know the law, you are not held accountable by it." Now for us as Latter-day Saints, we go, "Yes, that makes sense. That's awesome." But for a Jewish audience

that was hard to get their mind around because the Jews of the day believed that Torah was universally binding on everyone regardless of who they were. God's law was to be bound on all people regardless of whether they knew it or not.

00:29:51 And understanding that, opened my mind so much to what Paul is trying to do to get these saints to love one another because for the Jewish Christians, they'd been taught their whole lives that you have to follow the law, there has to be a law that you have to follow line by line, word by word, walk by walk. And now that the Savior's coming and atoning for our sins, they're having a hard time wondering, "Well, what about what do I do? What is my responsibility then if the Savior's going to come?" And that's where we go back to that charis from chapter 1, is that we cannot repay what the Savior did. We can't make up or we couldn't have done what he did, but we can walk faithfully. And when we know that's what we're supposed to do, we have an elevated expectation to live it, that with the law, we know what sin is, and so the expectation is we have to live sin free because we know what the law is. But for those who don't know the law, the Atonement makes up that difference because you can't hold them accountable for something they didn't know.

John Bytheway: 00:30:59 It took me years to figure out that when we're talking about those that don't know the law, if I were to say that in today's context of TV shows, it would sound like, "Oh, somebody who went to law school, criminal law, whatever." We're talking about the law of Moses when we say the law. And then you use the phrase Josh, great synonym, you're bound to the Torah even if you don't know it. So the Torah is...

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:31:25 Law.

John Bytheway: 00:31:25 ... the law. The law. It's the law of Moses. So it was so helpful for me to realize that when we talk about the law and the prophets, we're talking about parts of the Old Testament, the law, first five books, and the prophets, the prophetic books in the Old Testament. So when Jesus says things like, "On these two, hang all the law and the prophets," he's talking about books.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:31:48 Yes. One of the hard parts with Hebrew is the word for law generally is Torah. And then the word for the law, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy is Torah. So sometimes when I teach, I say we're talking about law little T, and that's just law in general. And then when we're talking about the law, capital T, that's Genesis through Deuteronomy.

But in there is this is the way that one is supposed to walk. This is the way in which one is supposed to live.

00:32:19 I can't even imagine what it would be like for some of these Jewish Christians to come into Christianity and say, "Now what? What do I do? What does my worship look like? How do I show my devotion to God?" And so I have sympathy for them because they are trying to do the best with what they have. They don't have a leader that's there to guide them every step of the way and they're saying, "No, no, no, no. These things were good. In my life, when I followed the law, look at these blessings that I received." The gentile Christian is looking and saying, "Well, so you're saying I have to follow your law?" But in Christianity, that law's not there.

00:33:00 And so you're getting that friction. And so that's why Paul is trying to specifically say to those Jewish Christians, "You know the law. You lived the law, but the law is not what binds us to God any longer. It's the Atonement of Jesus Christ." And so, you need to be loving kindness. You need to show loving kindness and grace to those Gentile Christians who aren't coming from that same background.

Hank Smith: 00:33:24 So Josh, as we've read through these first eight verses of chapter 7, it can be really confusing. I'm using Bible Hub here trying to get other takes on this because this seems like you said it can get a little convoluted. So would I be correct in saying that Paul is telling these Roman saints, "The law basically told us what was right and what was wrong. It delineated what was right and what was wrong. And so it told us when we were sinning and when we were not sinning. Christ does more than that"? He says, now we are verse six, "We're serving in the newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." So Christ has maybe changed why I don't sin, why I live the commandments?

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:34:11 And it's your motivation. And Hank, I want to make you feel better.

Hank Smith: 00:34:14 Okay.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:34:14 You are not the only one that looks at these texts and goes, "Wow, this is heavy." And the reason I can say that is, is one of the most extensive Joseph Smith translations that we have for the entire Bible is Romans chapter 7. And so I think maybe even helping, and for our audience who's read and our listeners are looking through this and going, "I'm never going to make sense of this," Joseph Smith is going to try and help us out with these

very verses. And so being able to see that Joseph Smith saw this and said, "Heavenly Father, I need to help the saints better understand this." Let's look at those same two verses that we just did, verses 7 and 8, and how the Joseph Smith translation actually helps us. So here he says, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law. For had I not known lust except the law had said thou shalt not covet." But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead."

00:35:20 So he kept the word. So he's going to keep a lot of that, but the explanation that's going to follow... So going to the Joseph Smith translation, a lot of the first few verses are the same, but look at what Joseph Smith does to try and clarify this in verses 14, 15 and 16 of the Joseph Smith translation. So Joseph Smith translation of Romans 7 starting in verse 14, "For we know that the commandment is spiritual. But when I was under the law, I was yet carnal, sold under sin." Verse 15, "But now I am spiritual. For that which I'm commanded to do, I do. And that which I am commanded not to allow, I allow not." And then verse 16, "For what I know is not right, I would not do. For that which is sin, I hate."

00:36:07 And so the law was helpful because it helped us to be able to know what we should and shouldn't do. But it was carnal because going back to verse 1, it was temporal. It was just, "How do we live in this life? How do I live my day-to-day life? When Jesus Christ came, he came to elevate our focus from a temporal focus to a spiritual focus." And now the laws are about spirituality. "What am I doing to become?" I think of Lynn G. Robbins' amazing general conference talk of What Manner of Men and Women Ought Ye to Be? We often have to-do lists, but we rarely have to-become lists. That is what Paul is trying to say here, is the law was a to-do, but Jesus came to help us to be something better than what we are in our temporal state.

Hank Smith: 00:36:59 Wow, that's really good.

John Bytheway: 00:37:02 One of the things I feel like in the Book of Mormon, they never lost a sight of what the law of Moses was. They always saw it as pointing to Christ. And it seems like except for Sherem, right? He's the only one that argued otherwise. But when you look at Abinadi's amazing sermon, he tell him what I just told him, two verses at the end of Mosiah 16, because he came and asked the wicked priest, "What are you teaching?" And they said, "The law of Moses."

- 00:37:32 "Well, why don't you keep it?" And he lectured him on what the law is. So this is verse 14 of Mosiah 16. "Therefore, if ye teach the law of Moses, also teach it is a shadow of those things which are to come." And then the next verse, "Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord who is the very eternal Father. Amen."
- 00:37:55 And I just think, "Man, Abinadi just summed it up right there." This is what Robert Millet says, my favorite definition of the law of Moses. Law of Moses is a grand prophecy of Christ. And I think he's talking a lot about the sacrifices because we can see that in those. But then Abinadi gets it, that Christ hasn't come yet in Abinadi's time, but redemption cometh through Christ. So yeah, keep the law of Moses because we've been asked to, or strive to keep it, but never lose sight that redemption comes, salvation comes because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:38:31 Yeah. And John, I love that you did that because there's two more things in things in chapter 7 that I think really will help us understand the audience that Paul is trying to write to. In verse 9 in Romans 7, Paul says something autobiographical, which sometimes if we read too quickly we might miss. But in verse 9 he says, "For I was alive without the law once. But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Some commentators on this verse think that maybe Paul's gusto and real fire to be faithful, we think about Paul's experiences as Saul where he is persecuting the saints. We could go to Philippians where Paul says, "I was circumcised on the eighth day." It's kind of like somebody today maybe saying, "I was baptized at midnight on my eighth birthday."
- 00:39:19 "The very second I could be baptized, I was baptized. That's how zealous I was." But some people wonder, did Paul maybe fall away from Judaism for a while. As Paul is getting ingrained in the world, was there a time that he felt alive without the law once? That he stepped away from it? "But then when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. I realized that I needed to sacrifice the only thing I can sacrifice to God, which is my will to follow his commandments."
- 00:39:53 And so, maybe Paul is really sympathetic for those that are his Jewish Christian audience in these verses because he said, "I know what it's like to go without the law for a while and then to come back and to try and figure this out." And I think this is something for all of us that if there are times in our lives where we have lost commitment or maybe fallen away, that Paul is another example of many, many people who have felt a revival to come back. It's never too late. It's never too late to say, "No,

I'm going to recommit." And the adversary tries to tell us, "No, no, no, you've made your decision. It's over." But Paul here I think is being vulnerable for a second and saying, "No, there are times where I haven't been fully committed and I know what that did to me, and so I want to be understanding to you as well."

John Bytheway: 00:40:46 Wow. I love the idea that obviously there are many off-ramps of the covenant path, but there are also many on-ramps. They're always open. And if you've gotten on, get back on. And I love how my GPS never says, "You idiot!" My GPS just says, "Recalculating." Go fix this and get back on.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:41:11 And I love that. So that's one point I didn't want us to miss here in chapter 7. The other point, which may come back to what John was saying a little bit ago about what the law of Moses was supposed to point forward to, let's start in verse 24, because as Latter-day Saints, we might find something that this resonates with. Paul writes, "Oh, wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Paul is asking this question, "Who's going to redeem me from both physical and spiritual death? The law is temporal. It's only meant for my life, but what does that mean for me when this life is over?"

00:41:45 And then verse 25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin." And so he sets up and says, "I know the natural man is an enemy to God. I know I'm wretched. I know that I have a propensity to want to sin, but I myself am going to serve God." This is Paul's Joshua moment. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." He's saying, "My body wants to serve sin, but I'm going to serve this."

00:42:16 Now I would be remiss for those who know me if I didn't recognize the Dead Sea Scrolls contribution to what this is helping us understand. Verse 25, this idea of the flesh and the law of sin. We get an idea of what this would've meant to a Jewish audience in one of the Dead Sea scrolls called the community rule. So in the community rule, we have an idea of what Paul is talking about here in verse 25. So this is 1QS, column 11, lines nine through 15, but they read, "As for me, to evil humanity and the council of perverse flesh do I belong. My transgressions, evil sins and corrupt heart belong to the council of wormy rot and those who walk in darkness. Surely a man's way is not his own. Neither can any person firm his own step. Surely, justification is of God. By His power is the way made perfect. All that shall be He foreknows. All that is, His plans established. Apart from him is nothing done."



00:43:21 "As for me, if I stumble, God's loving kindness forever shall save me. If through sin of the flesh I fall, my justification will be by the righteousness of God, which endures for all time. Though my affliction breakout, he shall draw my soul back from the pit and firm my step on the way. Through his love, he has brought me near. By his loving kindness, shall he provide my justification."

00:43:49 I don't know about you, but to me that sounds like scripture. That is again the community rule that was written sometime between 150 BC. So we're talking 150 or 100 years. I wonder if Paul has a text like that in mind because he talks about, "I'm wretched and I have this, but God will justify me." And he's then going to say, "It's not by me that this is justified. God can't just forgive sin. He had to send his only-begotten son to atone for us." These Jewish texts are saying, "Well, God's going to do this. It's in his plan." But what was his plan? His plan was to send Jesus Christ to suffer, bleed, and die and be resurrected so that we could find that justification.

John Bytheway: 00:44:37 Great stuff. I really like where we went. When you read this and you hear Paul just saying, "Oh, I know that to do the right thing and then I don't," I mean, I don't think we can assume too much that he was always messing up. Do you know what I mean?

Hank Smith: 00:44:49 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:44:52 Because when I read, "Oh wretched man that I am" from Nephi, I'm like, "I would like to be that wretched. I'd also like to be large in stature, but that ain't happening." So I wonder if we can overthink that as he talks about wrestling with the flesh because we all do, we mess up, but I don't think it was a really bad and consistent habit of messing up.

00:45:14 Let me read something that's Dr. Robert L. Millet, a guest on the program, we've had his book called Becoming New. It's a commentary on Paul. And this is what he says on page 38. The title of this paragraph is Paul Before and After Christ. "Chapter 7 of Romans has resulted in more misunderstanding about Paul and about the human race in general than almost any other chapter of scripture. A cursory reading will cause most persons unfamiliar with the Pauline epistles to shake their heads and wonder how in the world the Apostle Paul managed to garner so much attention through the years as well as how he could possibly have been so admired and respected by Christians through the centuries. As it reads in the King James version, or for that matter, most any other translation, we see, poor, old, pitiful Paul, a weak simpering and pathetic excuse of a man

whose life is completely out of control, a man who never does what he should do and always seems to be doing what he shouldn't."

00:46:10 And you can kind of get that impression for some of those verses. Next paragraph.

00:46:13 "My late colleague Robert J. Matthews wrote, 'As rendered in the KJV, Paul is sinful, carnal, and wicked even after years in the apostleship and knows not how to do good or even what is good. The JST rewords the passage in such a way as to show the difference between Paul's life while under the law of Moses and his life after he failed and obeyed the gospel of Christ. In the Joseph Smith translation, Paul explains that when he was living under the law of Moses, he was carnal. But through the gospel, including receiving its covenants and ordinances, he has become spiritual. Most important that Joseph Smith translation states that it is only in Christ that he learned how to be a good man and that through the assistance of Christ, Paul subdues the sin within him'."

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:47:06 So good. I think that works really well right after reading the JST and showing our little struggle of being able to really make heads or tails out of what's going on.

John Bytheway: 00:47:15 As I was looking to this, I noticed that footnote 5A in chapter 7 says, "JST, Romans 7:5 through 27 appendix." And then I notice footnote 15A, "JST Roman 7." It's like, "No, really, go to the JST." It's in there twice telling us to read the same verses. It's like, "No, really, you got to see this." So that's an important addition.

Hank Smith: 00:47:40 Yeah, some people might not even know where to find that Joseph Smith translation. If you're in your old paper copy, it's back after the Bible dictionary before the maps. I've had students before who thought, "I've never even seen this." Speaking of that JST, John, I think everyone should go read this and listen to these last two verses. It ends chapter 7 in more of a positive tone than it ends in the KJV. It's now 26. He's added a couple of verses here. "And if I subdue not the sin which is in me, but with the flesh serve the laws of sin, Oh, wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, that so with the mind, I myself serve the law of God." It is just a little bit of a change that makes I think a significant difference.

John Bytheway: 00:48:34 Well, that's great. There is a verse there that helped me a lot when I was a single adult. I fulfilled all my eligibility as a young single adult and went into single adult. The last half of verse 18,

		"For to will is present with me. I want to do the right thing, but how to perform that, which is good, I find not." I just think that's...
Hank Smith:	00:48:56	Oh, yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:48:57	I know what I'm supposed to do, but I'm incompetent sometimes at doing what I'm supposed to do. I thought that was helpful. "To will I want to do it. How to do it, I don't know yet."
Hank Smith:	00:49:09	Yeah, it's almost like he's saying, "the desire to do good is right there, but I just don't have the ability right now."
John Bytheway:	00:49:15	Yeah.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:49:16	This is so good because again, coming back to the audience, Paul's coming down hard and trying to correct years and years of training. And so to be able to say, "I know your hearts. I know that you're good people. I've heard nothing but good about you. Please do not take this as me simply saying, "You're wretched." I'm the wretched one. But I know your hearts that you want to do this just like me. And so please, please, please know that I'm writing." And it's so hard in that medium. Paul couldn't just jump on the internet, couldn't just go on FaceTime or anything like that to talk to these people. He's got to convey everything in writing. Any chance that we can see where he's trying to say, "Hey, I'm reassuring you, I'm like you. I know this. I've been where you are. I'm here to support you." It's so important because he's trying to build unity in what seems to be an impassable situation.
Hank Smith:	00:50:08	Yeah. And it's really nice to see a leader do that. I think that's really nice to see a leader be a little vulnerable in saying, "Hey, I haven't always done the right things." And same with parenting.
John Bytheway:	00:50:19	With Nephi, "Oh, wretched man that I am," that's one of his greatest moments. You wouldn't say to Nephi, "Come on, Nephi. Don't have low self-esteem." I mean, no, he was in a great place right there. And then he goes on with, "But I know in whom I have trusted. My God has been my support" and gives that psalm of Nephi in 2 Nephi 4. So I'm with you, Hank. I'm glad Nephi said, "Oh, wretched man that I am" because it makes us all go, "We're going to have moments where we're like, "Ah," but then we know in whom we have trusted and we move forward. Good stuff.

Hank Smith:	00:50:55	Speaking of moving forward, Josh, what do you want to do next?
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:50:59	We've now kind of set the tone with this idea of the law is no longer binding upon Christians. And now when we get to chapter 8, I've actually written in my scriptures under chapter 8, "Life is empowered by the Holy Spirit." And so as we're going through a theme of the next part of this chapter is, well, how does the Spirit then empower our lives? Because the question Paul is again trying to project what questions people are going to ask when they're reading this epistle, they're going to get to the end of this and ask, "Okay, so what am I supposed to do then? If I'm not supposed to follow the law, what is the expectation that I'm supposed to have?" And so, here comes chapter 8. And again, these divisions are arbitrary. They weren't in the original manuscripts, so this is just a continuation of the thought.
	00:51:48	But chapter 8, he says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." So this is a little bit of a rebuke to those Jewish Christians. There is no condemnation to those Gentile Christians who aren't following the law. Know that that's the case. They're walking after the Spirit. Well, what does that look like? Verse 2, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." So it's the fact that Jesus Christ has given the law of the spirit of life. What is it that the Spirit, that promised spirit, that came on the day of Pentecost, what is it teaching us to do? Are we following it?
	00:52:33	In the back of my mind, I will never forget President Nelson's statement. "In a coming day, it will be impossible to survive spiritually without the guiding and directing help of the Spirit." That is what Paul's trying to say is, "Now, your expectation is you are to live by the Spirit. And there are laws that the Spirit is going to dictate. Sometimes it's just going to be you and the Spirit that knows what that law looks like, but it's going to be there and you need to follow it." And so, we need to be empowered to live according to the Spirit, and the Spirit is what's going to guide and direct us.
	00:53:09	Interestingly enough, the word there is pneuma in Greek, which is the same word that we see in the Old Testament as the spirit that is over the earth during creation. And so, tying that back to the spirit of life, the breath of life that God gives to Adam and Eve when they're created, that's the very essence of life. It's supposed to be directed by the Spirit.

- 00:53:32 And to give commentary to that, one of my favorite talks that was ever given by Sister Nelson, so this is January 2017, her discussion love and marriage. And so she goes through, and I use this with my seminary students all the time when I teach intimacy because she teaches it so well. So the word here that spirit of life is the Greek word pneuma that is used throughout the Old Testament Greek translation as the spirit of life, it's the spirit that's over the creation in Genesis 1, 2. It's connected to this idea of the breath of life that's given to Adam and Eve in the creation. It's what was supposed to dictate their lives.
- 00:54:13 And as I read this verse, I see Paul trying to say, you need to live in a way that the Spirit is always present. And whenever I think of this, I can't help but want to teach Sister Wendy Nelson's discussion on the importance of the Holy Ghost. She's talking about intimacy, but she will broaden it out to everyone, and life. She goes, "For true marital intimacy, the Holy Ghost needs to be involved. It is simply not possible to have the intimate experiences outside of marriage that you can have within because the spirit will not be present."
- 00:54:45 "Elder Parley P. Pratt taught that the Holy Ghost has the ability to increase, enlarge, expand, and purify all the natural passions and affections. Just imagine he can purify your feelings. Therefore, anything that invites the spirit into your life and into the life of your spouse and your marriage will increase your ability to experience marital intimacy. It really is as simple and as profound as that. On the other hand, anything that offends the spirit will decrease your ability to be one with your spouse. Things such as anger, lust, unforgiveness, contention, immorality, and unrepented sin will reduce your attempt for marital intimacy to be something that is nothing more than a sexual experience."
- 00:55:26 Now, while Sister Nelson is putting that within the realms of marital intimacy, I think we can connect it to Paul that it's anything in our lives. If there is anything we're doing in our lives or we're trying to do without the spirit, it's not going to be as successful as if we try to do it with the spirit. And a lot of what we're going to read in chapter 8 is all about receiving that spirit. How do we avoid the things that will drive the spirit away? And how do we accept and receive the spirit into our lives and live after the direction that we receive from it?
- 00:56:00 The reason that the spirit can direct us, verse three... And again, we cannot divorce ourselves from this eternal and essential truth. Verse three in chapter 8 of Romans, "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending

his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." So why can we live after the spirit? Why can the spirit quicken our lives and help us? It's through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

00:56:29 The Holy Ghost is not doing anything independent of the Savior's atoning sacrifice. It's amplifying it. And so, our lives should be lived in a way in which the spirit is guiding and directing us to be able to do many great things. And a great summary of this would be verse 6, which reads a little bit differently than what we see later in the Book of Mormon, but Romans 8:6, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." And so we do have that cross-reference in the Book of Mormon where it's to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life eternal. So we get a little bit of a difference in what Paul is writing here, but that's the whole essence of what Paul is trying to get these Jewish Christian and Gentile Christians to understand, is you need to be spiritually minded. You need to have your eye set on the glory of God rather than focusing just on worldly and temporal things.

John Bytheway: 00:57:28 I loved what you said about having the spirit and the Holy Ghost in guiding us and the atonement of Jesus Christ are being connected. This is what Brigham Young said. This is Journal of Discourses, volume 12, 104. "There is no doubt if a person lives according to the revelations given to God's people. He may have the spirit of the Lord to signify to him his will and to guide and to direct him in the discharge of his duties in his temporal as well as his spiritual exercises. I'm satisfied however that in this respect, we live far beneath our privileges."

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:58:05 So good.

John Bytheway: 00:58:06 So when you're talking about being spiritually minded, you mean the Holy Ghost can really help us with everything we have to do? Yeah, would love to. And isn't that what happened at the sacrament table? We can always have his spirit to be with us. But I love Brigham Young says, "We're living beneath our privileges," which makes me want to, "I got to step it up. I got to be more spiritually minded like Paul's saying here."

Hank Smith: 00:58:30 Excellent. I really like this discussion because if you two are anything like me, I know when I've lost the spirit. And that hopefully doesn't happen often, but I can see that to be carnally minded or to be driven by your emotions or by your appetites and passions, it's not going to end well. It never ends well. But if you're guided by the spirit and you're in control of those things,

it leads to life and peace. And he says the carnal mind is enmity against God in verse 7, which sounds a lot like King Benjamin, "The natural man is an enemy to God" because it hurts God's children.

- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:59:08 Yeah. And Hank, I think one of the other steps that we can move that discussion to is that keep in mind our context. There's contention between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians and it's because they are being carnally minded. They're focused right here and now. We see this in the news. We see this in discussions of, "Our world today is pretty divided." Why not turn to Paul's words and say, "Okay, we may be divided over different issues, we may be divided over different questions, but Jesus Christ can unify us just like he unified them. We can find that." And one of those first steps is for myself to look introspectively and say that I am being carnally minded about this subject and I can become better. I love what Paul says in verse 9 of Romans 8, "But ye are not in the flesh. You're holy ones. You're set apart. You're saints. But in the spirit, and if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."
- 01:00:13 So if we are acting outside of that spirit, we're not acting for Christ. But verse 10, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." And so we're seeing this emphasis that we need to be those who seek to welcome the spirit and to especially welcome the Savior into our lives. And what are his great commandments? Love God, love our neighbor. And that's what overcomes this carnality that is evident in all of us.
- John Bytheway: 01:00:47 It's really fun to see it in the context of Paul trying to get these groups together. I'm so glad you're doing that because it's giving me a lot of, "Oh" type of... "Oh, I get it."
- Hank Smith: 01:01:00 The connection between the Holy Ghost and the Atonement I don't think is something that's as understood among church members as it could be. Then Elder Henry B. Eyring said, this is a BYU speech given way back in 1989. Do you guys remember the 1900s?
- John Bytheway: 01:01:20 I was there, I bet.
- Hank Smith: 01:01:22 Were you? Yeah, you probably were. He says, "You can invite the Holy Ghost companionship in your life and you can know when he is there and when he withdraws." This is the part that really is profound to me. "And when he is your companion, you can have confidence the Atonement is working in your life."

That's something that for a long time I didn't connect to the Holy Ghost companionship, is that's an indication that the Savior's atonement is changing your nature, as Paul would say here, changing you from carnally minded to spiritually minded.

- Dr. Joshua Matson: 01:02:00 So with all of this discussion about receiving the spirit and trying to be able to say that's the new rallying direction that we're going to receive, I love what Paul's going to do here in verses 15, 16 and 17 of Romans 8. He starts, "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Now look at how he's playing the spirit of life and of peace and of joy that comes from God, "With the spirit of bondage and fear that comes from the adversary." He's really setting up this dichotomy. But he then says, "But ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father." Paul is trying to tell these Christian saints in Rome, "When you accepted Christ, you were adopted into a family that is together. And while you might have some quarrels with your siblings that have a little bit different views than you do, we are family and we have the same God."
- 01:02:55 "And so, that spirit beareth witness," in verse 16, "with our spirit, and we are children of God." So Paul is trying to emphasize what the true identity is of these Christians. It doesn't matter if you're Gentile Christian, it doesn't matter if you're a Jewish Christian. You are a Christian. Drop the precedent. Drop whoever you were before and focus on this. In our day, President Nelson is trying to get us to do the same. What is our identity? First and foremost, it's our divine identity as children of God, children of the covenant, that we are individuals who have put God first. And so, being able to recognize that Paul is saying the same thing about identity, that President Nelson is saying about identity today shows that we have a connection with these ancient saints, but we've been adopted by God and we are his children and we have his spirit with us.
- Hank Smith: 01:03:52 We're joint heirs, we're children of God, we are a family. That seems to be something that he's saying, "You've got to unite to these Roman saints."
- Dr. Joshua Matson: 01:04:02 And ultimately, isn't that the purpose of Zion? I sometimes get frustrated with my students when we talk about the second coming and they look at me and say, "Brother Matson, how bad does the world have to get before Jesus comes back?" And I turn that around and say, "Can I ask you a question? How good do we need to get before Jesus comes back?" And one of those things is to understand our identity and understand that we're all in this together, that we as saints need to join arm in arm



and build the kingdom in preparation for that. Because it's by doing that, verse 17, "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. And if it so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Hank Smith:	01:04:46	If we want the king to come, we better build the kingdom for him to come to.
John Bytheway:	01:04:52	Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:00	Continue listening for part two with Dr. Joshua Matson, Romans 7 through 16.
Hank Smith:	00:00:07	Fantastic, Josh, let's keep going through chapter 8. What are we looking at next?
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:00:11	Well, we've talked about being joint heirs with Christ in 8:17, but I want to focus on a part that doesn't get emphasized much, which is the last part after the semicolon. So verse 17 in Romans 8, "If so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together." It says that salvation is a joint experience, and I remember sitting in the temple, hearing something similar to that in an endowment session, and thinking, why would the Lord want me to be connected with him and being able to receive the salvation? He's done the work. I'm riding his coattails.
	00:00:49	But one of the things that we see throughout the New Testament are these different models of explaining what the Atonement is. So you have the redemption model, which is that we need to be bought back by the atonement of Jesus Christ. You have the substitution model where Jesus took all of our sins and experienced the consequences of them, and so he substituted himself for us. You have the expiation model, which is borrowing from the Old Testament sacrifices and the idea of a sacrifice covering our sins. That word kippur, to cover, that's connected with the Atonement. We have the reconciliation model, which is the idea that the Atonement reconciles estranged people, us, with God.
	00:01:33	But a model that we don't talk a lot about is here in verse 17, which is the participation model of salvation, is that we actually participate in that salvation, and it's not that we do anything that Christ couldn't do. It's that we participate, and I love the words in Jesus Christ in The World of the New Testament, that great volume that was edited by a number of BYU professors. But when they describe this, they say, "In this model, Jesus shares the pains and suffering of his people who likewise are transformed by sharing in some way what Jesus experienced. If

so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together also. This model is particularly important for explaining the role of ordinances such as baptism in conveying the grace of Christ."

00:02:22 So why do we enter into covenants? Why do we participate in those things? Because we're expected to help others, like Christ has helped us. We participate not because the ordinances or the works that we do do anything that Christ can't do. It's because we are participating in the work of salvation. And I think that's so important for us to recognize that the Atonement, it covers everything, but God wants us to be faithful, as we talked about at the outset.

Hank Smith: 00:02:54 Yeah. He goes on, Josh, to talk about the sufferings of the present time. That's verse 18. He says, yes, that's part of our faith, is suffering with him. He says, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed within us."

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:03:14 And that verse, Hank, is so good, and it reminds me of your discussion that you had with Dr. Dan Belnap where he used this when talking about the Atonement, is that Jesus Christ's suffering, he went through it because of the fact that he knew that there would be glory in it for him and for us. And how much is the glory also part of the atoning sacrifice? I was really impressed with Dr. Belnap's discussion about verse 18, and I think that was something that I really benefited from.

Hank Smith: 00:03:42 I really liked that episode as well with Dr. Belnap. I like them all. He seemed to connect us to the Savior in a wonderful way in suffering, and I think it fits with what Paul says in verse 31. "If God be for us," or if we're on the same team as God, "who can be against us." Or Joseph Smith changes, "Who can prevail against us?"

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:04:04 Prevail.

Hank Smith: 00:04:05 Once you become joint heirs with Christ and with this whole family, you're on the winning side.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:04:11 And how important would that be to his audience? There were some people who are going to hear this for the first time from Phoebe, and they're going to say, "I felt like my neighbor in the congregation was against me, but I can have faith to keep coming to church because Jesus is with me. He knows my heart." It's coming back to this context, and then Paul's great words in verse 35, as you were talking about, "God being with

us, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?" No, none of those things can separate us from God. Why? Because verse 28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." So even those tribulations, not that God's going to take them away from the righteous, but he can utilize even persecution, distress, nakedness, peril, and sword for our good if we trust in him.

- John Bytheway: 00:05:08 Do we have any verses anywhere that say he'll just take them away? That sounds nicer.
- Hank Smith: 00:05:13 Yeah, I would like that.
- John Bytheway: 00:05:14 Like swords and pestilence and famine and stuff. Yeah, I enjoy those as much as the next guy, but-
- Hank Smith: 00:05:22 So Josh, tell us what's in chapter 9.
- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:05:24 And so we're going to take this idea that you're all adopted, you're all part of Christ, but Paul has got to go back and say, I need to explain some things. And we see it throughout the Old Testament that God emphasizes peculiarity of his covenant people, of covenant Israel, that because they were born into the covenant and they accepted the covenant through those ancient ordinances, the question that Paul is trying to answer right at the outset is, okay, so this is great and all, but we know that the Jewish people are God's chosen people. So where do these Gentiles fit in those promises? So here in chapter 9, Paul is going to answer this question of those who may ask, wait, we were Jewish. We were promised that we were God's peculiar and covenant people and that we had a specific destiny to fulfill. Where do these Gentiles fit into all of that?
- 00:06:22 They've now joined the church. They're now Christians, but where does that come in? And I love chapter 9. I could spend a whole day talking about it, and I've already talked a lot. But chapter 9 is really great because Paul takes scriptures from all walks of the Old Testament, from the Torah, from the Law, from the prophets, from the writings, and he shows time and time again that God has a plan and a purpose and a promise for the Gentiles. So while those who are of a Jewish heritage are saying, "No, no, no, we are the covenant people. We have promises," Paul says, "No, look at the Scriptures. The Scriptures are talking about where I feel towards other nations. And you don't have the right to be able to come in and say, 'No, we are the chosen ones but not them,' because God actually has time and time

again in your Law talked about how important the Gentiles will be."

00:07:15 And I think it can all be summed up with verse 15, which is a quotation of Exodus 33:19. "For he saith to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.'" We are not those who should judge who is worthy of the covenant and who is not, and no matter their background, God has a role and a purpose for them. And so chapter 9 is just a plethora of quotations from the Old Testament that show that the Gentiles actually are promised holy people.

Hank Smith: 00:07:47 It's a little persuasive essay using the book they know best.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:07:51 Absolutely. So again, when we know that that's who his audience is, it helps us to be able to do that.

Hank Smith: 00:07:56 I really liked verse 24. "Even us whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." Is he not the God of Jews and Gentiles? Wouldn't you want your God to be that big?

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:08:10 Yeah. So now we're going to come to chapter 10, and we're going to see that he's going to continue to try and emphasize this need that what you did while you were under the old covenant, that is great and that's fine. And that zeal, you need to use it as you're following Jesus Christ. So in verse 2 of chapter 10, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge," so when we're talking about the Gentiles, they are also zealously trying to follow God in the best way that they know how. One of the most impactful lessons that I had while I was at the MTC preparing to serve a mission was when our MTC teacher sat down and said, "I want you all to know just how much God loves all of his children," and she shared with us an experience she had in her mission where she learned with absolute certainty that God was not a respecter of persons, that people were trying to do the best that they could with the knowledge that they have. Going back to loving kindness, we treat people differently when we know that they're trying their best.

00:09:17 I think of my children. When I walk into a bedroom and I say, "Hey, have you cleaned your room," and I walk in and I see their bed is not quite made the way that I would make it and their toys aren't quite put away where I'd want them to be put away and they turn around and they look at me with triumph in their eyes and say, "Daddy, look, I did it," how can I help but be proud of that? And the same thing is being said by Paul, and he's trying

to help everyone in Rome understand those who were Jewish, those who were Gentiles, they were doing the best that they could with the knowledge that they had.

00:09:51 Now let's come together. Let's love one another because the things that we're doing... He's going to quote Moses in verse 8 of chapter 10. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is in of the Law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them." You're doing the best with what you have, and looking around at those in our congregations today, I think we can say something similar. Those who are sitting in church are doing the best that they can. How can we not help but be proud? But too often, we let the natural man take over and we try to judge and look at them through our lens rather than through God's lens.

John Bytheway: 00:10:28 I went to get a haircut once. The woman who was giving me a haircut, I asked her where she lived and stuff and found out she was a member of the church and where she went to church. And she lived in my area, but her parents had served a mission in an inner city mission, and she said, "I love to go there. I am still there because, number one, I feel so needed and, number two, when people come, we're just so glad to see them there. And I love that welcoming people there." And it made me think about just my mission and how grateful we were that anybody came and just I'm so glad you're here. And some people came in the Philippines with flip-flops and a T-shirt with a beer ad on it because that's all they had, and we were so glad they were there. And so I like what you said about that. I love the mindset of just being so grateful that people are there, that they're coming to worship and coming to take the sacrament table to hear about Jesus. How can we not help but be happy about that?

Hank Smith: 00:11:34 Yeah. I can see this theme that you've showed us, Josh, where Paul is continually trying to bring these two groups together. This is Romans 10:12: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It sums up what he's trying to do over and over with these Roman saints.

John Bytheway: 00:12:01 I was thinking as we read this, it reminds me a little bit of the parable of the laborers in the vineyard looking sideways. Who are they, and where do those guys come from? And how much do they get paid? And he's got that challenge. For this, it's different place, different country, different upbringing, but not to compare. There's no difference. The Lord is over all.

Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:12:26	And I love that statement right there, the Lord over all. The word Lord there in the Greek, kyrios, would've meant something different to the Jewish congregation and the Gentile congregation. Kyrios is the word that's used in the Greek translation for Jehovah in the Old Testament. This is the translation of Lord. And then for the Greek audience, this is something that would've been a word that you would use for a master, somebody who's over a household. I'm so impressed at how Paul is balancing both of these congregations, and he's using words that will mean something of importance to both of them. And he's crafting his statement in such a way that, as verse 11 will say from the quotation of Isaiah 28:16, "Whosoever, or all who believe on him shall not be ashamed." Anyone who does is welcome, and Paul's able to craft this so well.
	00:13:19	And using my Dead Sea Scrolls background, this is Paul's Peshier on all those verses that he had quoted in chapter 9. So this is where Paul's going to say, I'm going to explain it now and what it means in our terms today, not just what it meant to those who originally wrote these texts in the Old Testament. So chapters 9 and 10 go really well together if you read them in that way.
Hank Smith:	00:13:39	Yeah.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:13:40	So continuing on this idea that Paul is providing a commentary on all of these scriptures, Paul is going to move in chapter 11 and to do something for me that was most impactful of all of this. So he's going to continue to quote those scriptures, and he's going to continue to try and provide a commentary in 11:1-12. But I want to pick up in verse 13, so in verse 13 he says this: "For I speak to you Gentiles inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles. I magnify my office." This idea that Paul views himself as an apostle to the Gentiles is repeated later in chapter 15. If you go to chapter 15 and connect this because it's going to help them understand the rest of what's going to happen in the rest of the chapter, so here in Romans 11:13 where he calls himself the apostle to the Gentiles and that he's magnifying his office, if we cross-reference that to 15:9, he sees this.
	00:14:43	So Paul writes in Romans 15:9, "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, for this cause, I will confess to among the Gentiles and sing unto thy name." This is a quotation of Psalm 18:49, 50. I think Paul sees himself in that scripture. It is that Paul is reading Psalm 18:49, 50, or singing it because these are the hymns of ancient Judaism, and I wonder if he says, "Who is this scripture talking about?" It's not unlike

what happens with the three witnesses in the Book of Mormon. It is that as Joseph is translating, individuals like Martin Harris turn to him and say, "Joseph, who are these three witnesses? And if these witnesses are there, can I be one of them?" And I love that proactive approach to scripture. It is that Paul is reading, studying, participating in scripture, and then he's saying, "Well, could this be a fulfillment? Could I fulfill this prophecy in my life? Could I live this out?" When he's talking about magnifying his office, and this is me speaking as me the gospel according to Josh, but I wonder if Paul didn't see that and say, "I want to do that."

Hank Smith: 00:15:56

Josh, he almost flat out says, doesn't he, in Romans 15:16? "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." I think you're right on there.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:16:12

Yeah. And so for me, if I'm reading this today or if I'm having a discussion with students, I might say, "What prophecies in scripture do you want to help fulfill? What things that God wants to bring about do you want to be a part of? Because if God's going to do it for Paul, if God's going to do it for Martin Harris, why wouldn't he do it for you?" And if we have righteous intentions, if it's really to move the kingdom of God forward, not for our own self-aggrandizement, but God will want us to be part of that. And the whole section here is talking about foreordination, the idea that we're foreordained to do a great work, and maybe part of that has to do with our own agency. What do we choose to want to accomplish? I think that that for me is so exciting, that we can read the scriptures in a new way by saying, "That's a prophecy. I want to see it fulfilled. God, how can I do this?"

John Bytheway: 00:17:06

Reminds me of President Nelson's call to gather Israel, and then to make it so simple, he said, "Anytime you do anything that helps anyone on either side of the veil, take a step toward making covenants with Christ, you are helping to gather Israel." And all of us can participate in that. I love that you said that I can help make this come true. Another one comes to mind. Everyone will hear the gospel in their own tongue. Oh, I could maybe be a missionary, and I can try really hard to learn my language so they can hear the gospel in their own tongue.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:17:39

Or I can be President Nelson, and I can sit in a meeting with Spencer W. Kimball who asks if we're prepared to take the gospel to China. And I can go home and learn Chinese. If there's things that we need to do to prepare ourselves for that, I think



Paul's giving us a rallying cry. Go and do. Of your own volition, of your own choice, go and gather Israel in whichever way you see fit, what you can add and that you want to participate in. I think God wants to give us more of our wants than we sometimes allow him to participate in, and he'll magnify us as we do it with an honest heart.

John Bytheway: 00:18:14

If you have desires to serve, you're called to the work.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:18:17

The other part of Romans 11 that, especially for Latter-day Saints, is interesting is that we're going to get a parable of an olive tree, very similar to what we see in Jacob chapter 5, grafting. Much shorter. Maybe this is the abridged version. When you get to Jacob 5 in your Book of Mormon study at some point, you say, let's read the abridged version in Paul in Romans chapter 11. So Romans 11, in verse 16, he's going to give a very similar discussion to that, that God has a vineyard, his people are part of that vineyard, and he wants to graft in healthy, vigorous, great branches into the tree of Israel, as it were. He talks about grafting this wild branch in verse 17 that the Jewish Christians immediately are going to say, "Oh, that's the Gentiles. They're wild. They're not like us. They're not tame. They're wild."

John Bytheway: 00:19:10

Wild.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:19:11

That's where they're at. But it's fascinating as you look through this entire commentary that God's chosen people are all there. If you look, there's a word that's used frequently in here, broken off. So you can see it in verse 17. You can see it again in verse 19. You can see it again in verse 20 where he talks about because of unbelief, they were broken off. Now, we might easily assign this to just say, oh, these are just the Jewish people who chose not to follow the Law. Or we might say this is just the Gentiles. But what I would like to propose today is that when we read this, we read it as this is anybody who feels broken off, again, coming back to Paul's discussion of maybe falling off the covenant path.

00:19:53

So the Greek word here is ekleipo, which means to be disconnected or bent but not severed. It is a branch that is still connected to the tree. When we're talking about this branch being broken off, if we're following the Greek word, it's not completely broken off. It's always connected to a certain extent, and the only word that's used that gives us the idea of complete severing is in verse 22 and 24 where he uses a different word but one that's closely related in Greek. The Greek word is ekkapto, and it means to be cut off. So there's a difference

between being broken off and being cut off. We cannot cut ourselves off from the tree of Israel. We can make choices, and those choices may lead to one in authority cutting us off, but the choices that we make... And we can't just simply say, nope, I don't want to be a part of it anymore. Someone with authority has to cut us off. We can't break ourselves off.

00:21:04 And that can apply to a Gentile Christian. That can apply to a Jewish Christian. But reading this and then even going to Jacob 5 and reading Jacob 5 through that lens again gives me this message that no one is too far gone. No one is forgotten, and no one is completely disconnected from the nourishing power as a branch to the vine, which is Jesus Christ. We are not beyond his reach, and knowing the language there helps out a little bit to really get an idea of this parable talking about no one is beyond the reach of the Savior.

00:21:41 So after giving all of this parable, Paul is going to provide a quick commentary and say, I'm going to give you the meaning, unlike the Savior who usually gave the parable and said, okay, go figure it out for yourself, and there's things we can figure out. Paul is going to say, nope, I'm just going to give you the meaning. I don't want my words to be misinterpreted. And that's part of the overarching theme that we haven't talked about yet of Romans as well, is that there are rumors about what Paul is teaching among the Roman saints. So Paul wants to teach so clearly that he's not misunderstood.

Hank Smith: 00:22:11 We saw that in the book of Acts a little bit, where people say he's trying to destroy the Jewish way of life.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:22:17 So let's speak so clearly that we're not misunderstood. So I'm going to give you a parable, but I'm not going to give you permission to go out and do whatever you want with it. And so 25, "For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery lest you should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come in." You don't have a right to say that the tree is done. There is a time when the fullness of the Gentiles is going to add to this great tree of Israel, this olive tree of Israel. And so don't say that it's done because it's not, and don't think that your own interpretation, however you're going to spin it, is going to be enough. God still has more work to do among you.

Hank Smith: 00:23:01 Fantastic.

John Bytheway:	00:23:02	That's really interesting that we can be blinded by our thinking that we're wise. Interesting way to put it. You're wise in your own conceit, and that blindness in part has happened to Israel.
Hank Smith:	00:23:15	Yeah, I think so.
John Bytheway:	00:23:17	Yeah.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:23:17	And I think another commentary for that, John, because your question is great, what is he trying to say here, is we can actually get a commentary again from Jacob. I wonder if Jacob and Paul maybe had some connection in the premortal life or something because I think Jacob gets to your exact point, John. In 2 Nephi 9:42, he says this: "And whoso knocketh to him will he open and the wise and the learned and that are rich, who are puffed up because of their learning and their wisdom and their riches." It's not a knock about the Jewish Christians or the Gentile Christians being wise or using their philosophy and understanding. It's if they're using it to puff themselves up. That's the qualification. So Paul's trying to say, if you're going to take my interpretation and puff yourself up, you're going to be blinded by your own pride.
John Bytheway:	00:24:09	And it's cool that we're back in 2 Nephi 9 again, Jacob's great sermon there because we were there before to be carnally minded, his death to be spiritually minded as life eternal, or Paul says, "Life in peace."
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:24:20	Cool.
Hank Smith:	00:24:21	So is he talking to the Gentiles here? "For I would not, brethren," Gentiles, "that you should be ignorant of," the parable, lest you be really confident in your own opinions and become blind, but then he says, "Until the fullness of the Gentiles come in." So I'm a little-
John Bytheway:	00:24:38	Is he talking to Jewish converts? That's what I assume, Jewish converts to Christianity.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:24:43	Yeah. Hank and John, I'd actually say I think he's talking to both. I think Paul is so exact with what he's saying that if the audience is receiving this the right way, they're going to ask the question that the apostles asked at the Last Supper. Lord, is it I? Is this rebuke to me, whether I'm a Gentile Christian or a Jewish Christian? Because I can see both groups in that statement. And I think it's just a testimony to Paul's writing and how the Spirit has enabled him to do this as he's able to craft questions and

statements that would pierce the hearts of both groups to help them to say, do I need to be a little bit better?

Hank Smith: 00:25:23 Yeah. And I think his little phrase, that you should not be wise in your own, it can just be applicable to everyone. Be careful that you're not so sure of your opinions that you are blind to what maybe could influence your opinions.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:25:41 Yep. Again, don't be carnally-minded, be spiritually-minded, and that theme continues to move forward, as Paul finishes out. The end of chapter 11 is the end of his doctrinal section, so everything that we've talked about so far is just the doctrine. Paul is not really talking application yet. That's going to come in chapter 12 through the end of chapter 15, but here, it's just the doctrine. I'm just trying to give you a level playing field that we're all talking about the same doctrine as we're moving forward. This is so important for the saints in Rome to understand. It is that I am all about this because, in verse 27, "For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins." And again, you could point it to the Gentiles; you could point it to the Jewish converts. But I love Paul leaving it open for us to then reflect in our own day. What do I need to get away from because I'm part of the covenant? I'm part of God's covenant people. He'll take away my sins because of that covenant and because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, so what can I do to more fully receive it?

Hank Smith: 00:26:52 So, Josh, you're saying these are two halves of our lesson here. Chapter 7 through 11, doctrine; chapter 12 introduces a new application of Paul?

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:27:00 And so in all of Paul's epistles, in the body, we get the distinction between the doctrine section and the application, or the hortatory, section. What we see is it actually even extends all the way back to chapter 5. So 5:1-11:36 is all doctrine. It's the doctrine section. Now that we're at chapter 12, so 12:1-15:13, this is going to be, okay, what is now expected of you? I'm going to give you some clear direction of how you should live a better life. I love the words of Richard Lloyd Anderson, who called this section, so Romans 12:1 through Romans 15:13, Paul's Sermon on the Mount in the epistles. If we want to tether ourselves to something we're a little more familiar with, what Paul is going to teach in these next little over three chapters is going to be similar to the Sermon on the Mount.

00:27:56 How are you supposed to live? What does a Christian life look like and what is a Spirit-guided life going to be like if you're going to follow Jesus Christ to his fullness? So in Richard Lloyd

Anderson's amazing work Understanding Paul, he calls this the Sermon on the Mount of the epistles. That work by Richard Anderson was so impactful to me when trying to understand the epistles, but it helps give us a little bit of clarity and help connect us to something that we maybe are a little more familiar with, Jesus' teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. So now we can look at these chapters and say, okay, this is the go and do. What am I supposed to take from this? The doctrine was great, but now what's the therefore what? What am I supposed to do because of what I understand now?

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| Hank Smith:        | 00:28:40 | All right, I'm excited. Let's move forward. Chapter 12.  |
| Dr. Joshua Matson: | 00:28:43 | So in my Scriptures, one of the things that I do is whenever I come to something that is a do, a commandment, a good practice, I mark it in blue, and most of chapter 12, 13 and 14 are all blue highlights. And so we really could go anywhere we want to be able to just go through and say, okay, here we go. Here's something that we should do. Here's something else that I should do. Here's one of the aspects that are important. We could talk of 100 things. For me, I think verse 15, though, in chapter 12 of Romans is the best because it relates to something that I personally have covenanted to do. So in Romans 12:15, Paul says, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." And I know, Hank and John, you've been around long enough to know that that sounds an awful lot like the baptismal covenants in Mosiah 18:8, 9 where we usually say, "Mourn with those that mourn. Stand in comfort of those that need to stand in comfort." But how cool is it that here's Paul saying, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice." |
| Hank Smith:        | 00:29:47 | Hmm.   |
| John Bytheway:     | 00:29:48 | Mm-hmm.  |
| Hank Smith:        | 00:29:49 | A different take on it.  |
| John Bytheway:     | 00:29:51 | Yeah. Reminds me of Luke 15. "Rejoice with me. I found that which was lost."   |
| Hank Smith:        | 00:29:58 | Yeah. Any other verses we wanted to mention, John, Josh?   |
| John Bytheway:     | 00:30:01 | I love verse 20. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him drink." This little line, "For in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Why are you treating me so nicely? I'm your enemy. This is causing my scalp to burn. Right?  |

Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:30:21	John, I love that you brought that verse up because that's actually a quote from the Proverbs. So the idea of heaping coals of fire on the head of an enemy comes from Proverbs 25:22, and it's the image that a rise of shame is given when one gives kindness for unkindness. When one has chosen to do something good to someone who's doing something unkind, they fill the shame rise to their heads, and they almost become flush because of it. Again, just so magnificent and is understanding of the Scriptures. But using Proverb 25:22 in this way would've resonated with those Jewish Christians especially. They would've said, "Oh, I've read that before. Oh, I guess in my old law I was supposed to treat those that were unkind to me with kindness. I was persecuted by Gentiles for being Jewish here in Rome, and I've been holding that against my neighbor who is sitting next to me during our church services. Maybe that old law did have something that was trying to teach me about what I'm supposed to do now."
John Bytheway:	00:31:28	Great.
Hank Smith:	00:31:29	Yeah. Chapter 12 is just full of these. Like you said, Josh, it's all blue. It's full of these little what John calls sermons in a sentence. "Abhor that which is evil. Cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love. In honor, preferring one another. Don't be lazy in business. Fervent in Spirit. Serving the Lord. Rejoice in hope. Patient in tribulation. Continuing instant in prayer." And he keeps going, help the saints given to hospitality, bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not, and then that verse you shared, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that do weep." Just line after line is Paul saying, yeah, you're right. This is what you should do. Now that you understand the doctrine, here's what should happen.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:32:19	Yeah, and I think of Elder Boyd K. Packer's famous statement, "True doctrine understood changes attitudes and behaviors faster than the study of attitudes and behaviors." That's what Paul understood. I'm going to present you the doctrine. Now it's easy for me to say this because now you understand the why. You understand that, and I think it's really well summarized in verse 3. "For I say through the grace given unto me," so remember that loving kindness. And maybe this is from Jesus. Maybe this is from others because, remember, Paul has just as much reason to be fearful of both Gentiles and Christians because of his background. So because of the loving kindness given unto me, "to every man that is among you ... not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure

of faith." So he's saying, I'm not supposed to compare myself to you. It would be a terrible thing for me to compare myself to Hank and John. That's not going to be helpful for me in my progression. So I just need to think soberly and say, what's the measure that God has given me?

00:33:24 Again, going back to that same rule of the community text from the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1 QS, column four, lines two through six, we read this: "Upon the earth, their operation are these. One enlighten a man's mind, making straight before him the paths of true righteousness and causing his heart to fear the laws of God. The Spirit engenders humility, patience, abundant compassion, perpetual goodness, insight, understanding, and powerful wisdom resonating to each of God's deeds. Sustained by his constant faithfulness, it engenders a spirit of knowledge in every plan of action, zealous for the laws of righteousness, holy in its thoughts, and steadfastness in purpose. This Spirit encourages pious compassion upon all who hold fast to truth and glorious purity combined with visceral hatred of impurity in its every guise. It results in a humble deportment allied with general discernment, concealing the truth that is the mysteries of knowledge." The whole purpose of knowing something is to act in this way. If I know truth, it's to act with compassion and understanding.

00:34:34 The greatest advice I ever got from my doctor father, my PhD advisor at Florida State, is he said, "Josh, the best scholars in the world are those who are kindest to those who know least." And the idea that he gave me, Matthew Goff, a wonderful individual, was, "Josh, always remember that you're never above even the lowest scholar." That was the advice he gave me when I wrote my very first review and I was way too harsh, and he said, "Be kind." And that's what the Law teaches us. We know the Law better. We recognize that we just simply need to be kinder. We need to love more.

Hank Smith: 00:35:13 Yeah. "Be of the same mind, one toward another." That's verse 16.

John Bytheway: 00:35:19 Oh, keep going. It's exactly what you just said. "Condescend to men of low estate." Be the same with those whether you're in a group of super smart people or people of so-called low estate. I like that.

Hank Smith: 00:35:33 Yeah. "Be not wise in your own conceits," meaning don't-

John Bytheway: 00:35:37 There it is again.

Hank Smith:	00:35:38	Don't think too highly of yourself. You'll miss out on being able to help other people. John, you wanted to look at verse 21?
John Bytheway:	00:35:46	Yeah, just a great way to end. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." A really good one to think of, or as you said earlier, Josh, it sounds like it's written for our day. A lot of evil out there, but overcome evil with good.
Hank Smith:	00:36:01	Josh, does he continue doing this in chapter 13?
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:36:04	So he's going to continue to give some do's, but he's going to do it a little bit more generally. He's going to give some application that's important for us. If we look at verses 1 and 2 of chapter 13 in Romans, you might see that this sounds a lot like Article of Faith number 12. He says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers for there is no power but of God and the powers that are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinances of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." And so this sounds a lot like Article of Faith 12 about God instituting governments for the benefit of mankind, but there's something really cool that he does here.
	00:36:48	Throughout this section when he talks about higher powers and the rulers, he uses words that are for civic or temporal leadership. So in these first few verses, he talks about being willing to submit ourselves to those who have civic or religious authority over us. This is important given the context because the Romans are a little suspicious of what Christians are going to do. There's rumors floating around that Christians want to rise up in rebellion against Rome or they're gathering together in secret to rebel, and so one of the things Paul is trying to do is say, no, we are obedient to our civic authorities, however they may be, because, as we learn from the Doctrine and Covenants, God is going to hold those individuals accountable for the way in which they lead. And so the counsel now comes, you need to be humble, but you need to be humble to those that have power over you. Whether that's religious, secular, it doesn't matter.
	00:37:51	And so there's this element of civic duty in verses 1, 2, and 3, but then in verse 4, the word for minister here is diakonos, which is one of divine authority. So, "For he is the minister of God to thee for good." We can find good in trying to be the best that we can. And in a world that we're very quick to be critical of those that are leaders, and I don't want to say that with the idea that we can't be because there's a necessity of that, but God is the one who ultimately is the one that those individuals



will be accountable to. And if we get too caught up in being judge, jury, and executioner with every person that we encounter, we're not going to live that kindness that chapter 12 was trying to emphasize.

Hank Smith: 00:38:43

Let me see if I can get this right. Chapter 13 is Paul saying, be subject to the government. Don't resist the government. If you're doing good, you won't need to really fear the government because you're doing good. It's those who do evil, who break the laws basically, who should be afraid.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:39:02

Yep, that's exactly what he's saying when he gets to chapter 4. But again, I do love this idea in verse 5. "Wherefore you must need be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." So you need to be subject not just because you don't want to get in trouble, but you also want to have a clear conscience to say, I did everything that I was asked to do. The reason that this is an important discussion, we talked already about Rome and the idea that Rome had some suspicions of these Christians. We also still have Jewish Christians who are going to the synagogue, who are facing some contention with Jews in Rome because they're starting to live their life differently. And the high priest is, well, should we really let you into the synagogue to worship because you're resisting the things that we're teaching. So the context helps us understand that this one is directly applicable to the time in which Paul is writing, but it's also applicable for us that we might not know where we might be benefited by being humble and subjecting ourselves to that will because God may be able to use that for our benefit sometime down the road. So a lot of government and those in authority discussions will continue in Romans 13 all the way to verse 7. We're going to talk about paying taxes, paying tributes, paying customs.

00:40:22

The second half of chapter 13 starting in verse 9 is much more personal, and these will sound familiar to anybody who reads. "For this, thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet. And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." So Paul is saying, I could go through all the Jewish laws again if you want me to, but really, I can sum it up with thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Now, we always think of that as the new commandment that Jesus gave on Maundy Thursday in the upper room, but it really wasn't a new commandment because it was in the Law before. We get this in Leviticus 19:18 that that's what we're supposed to do. It really wasn't something that wasn't part of Jewish tradition. The great Jewish scholar and theologian Hillel, he actually said about that

very statement, thou shalt love thy neighbor is thyself, "This is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary. Now go and learn."

- Hank Smith: 00:41:29 That's great.
- John Bytheway: 00:41:30 Yeah, I feel like that reminds me of Jesus saying, "On these two hang all the Law and the prophets." So I could quote all of the commandments, but if you've got these two, all of the Law and the prophets hang on those. And I've always loved verse 12 because it's a phrase that I don't know if it's anywhere else. "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness. Let us put on the armor of light." What a cool phrase, the armor of light. I really like that.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:58 Sometimes it seems that Paul turns into a bit of a gospel pep talk, right, where he is really like... What does he say in verse 11? "It is high time for us to wake out of sleep," time to get moving, time to get working.
- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:42:14 We should put that up above our bed. "It is high time to awake out of sleep."
- Hank Smith: 00:42:19 Yeah.
- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:42:20 There's your daily motivation. John, I love that you pointed us to verse 12. And if you look, you can actually see a dichotomy between darkness and light. This idea that you have the works of darkness and the armor of light, the theme of darkness and light is so prevalent throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls, that light and darkness. There's a text called the War Scroll. And it sounds really, really cool, and it is. It's about this cosmic battle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, and I wonder if Paul might not actually be aware of some of those traditions and that's why he's saying armor of light.
- 00:42:58 Let me read you something from the War Scroll. This is one of the Dead Sea Scrolls that we found in Cave 1. It talks about this cosmic battle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. But in column 15, line nine, it says this: "Turn back, nor flee from them, for they are the wicked congregation. All their deeds are in darkness. It is their desire, and they all have established themselves as a refuge of a lie. Their strength is as smoke that vanishes, and all their vast assembly is as chaff which blows away desolation." So talking about that pep talk, you see that in 1QM in the War Scroll. And here, I like to think that maybe some of the Jewish individuals who have converted to Christianity, maybe they knew of that tradition, and so seeing

armor of light, their thinking of the vivid imagery from this War Scroll that we found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

- Hank Smith: 00:43:52 I really like these chapters. It seems that chapters 12, 13, 14, 15 are maybe a little bit easier to understand, Josh, than 7, 8, 9. And you did a great job walking us through those, but all of a sudden it seems a little more refreshing maybe, that I'm not having to just really look at every verse and go, what does he mean? I'm trying to figure it out.
- 00:44:16 Elder Marion D. Hanks way back in 1976 talked about these verses. He said, "All through the scriptures, the loftier expectation is expressed by the Lord in his apostles. Believe, repent, obey the doctrines, walk in the light of the Spirit, endure in faith, yes. But also, manifest your discipleship in civility, in gentility and tender compassion, in kindness and consideration, in patience and forbearance and refusal to condemn, in forgiveness and mercy. In the book of Romans we read that disciples are charged to be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, to weep with them that weep. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Walk honestly. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil of good."
- 00:45:09 Now he goes on, and he quotes a lot of Romans here. He said, "I think of a choice lady born with a severely handicapped body and wonderfully capacious and gracious spirit who, as she accepted an honor for her special contributions to other handicapped persons, spoke of an incident in her childhood." So now Elder Hanks is quoting this woman and summarizing her story. "Playmates had called her names that reflected on her physical condition and caused her pain and tears. When she reached home, her father held her in his lap, in his big strong arms, and wept with her as he explained that he had anticipated that day and that it would be a crucial one for her and could be an opportune one if she would learn the lesson that could make her life fruitful and happy."
- 00:45:55 "'Sweetheart,' he said, 'what the children said about you is true. But it wasn't fair, and it wasn't kind. You do have a hump on your back and some other serious problems, but that isn't your fault. It isn't your parents' fault or your heavenly Father's fault. It's one of those things that happen in this yet imperfect world. If all your life you will be more fair and more kind to others than some of them may sometimes be to you, then you'll be happy, and your life will be full and useful.' 'That,' she said, 'is what I have tried to do, just be more fair and kind to others than some of them have been to me.'" Isn't that great?

Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:46:39	Mm. So good.
John Bytheway:	00:46:40	Yeah.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	00:46:41	That's such a perfect introduction that segues from chapter 13 to chapter 14 because we've talked about these things and what we should do. And now Paul is going to introduce this idea, and it's going to go back to what we've talked about time and time again. He's going to have these code names for individuals that he may have had in mind, but they're coded in such a way that it could be any of the groups that we've talked about. So in Romans 14:1, he says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believe that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs." So he introduces this idea of those who are weak in faith and that they should be received.
	00:47:24	So throughout the rest of what's going to happen here in chapter 14 up to verse 13 and chapter 15, he's going to talk about those who are weak should be supported by those who are strong in the church and those who are strong should support those who are weak in the church, very much akin to what we see in Doctrine and Covenants 84:106, which is, "He that is strong should take he that is weak in ministering and doing the work." But we don't know who the weak are, and we don't know who the strong are. There are times where any of us are going to be weak, and there are other times where we are going to be strong. And the expectation is we receive help when we need it and we give help when we can give it. That is as an essence what the entire covenant that we make at baptism is, that we're going to help each other. Well, if we all refuse help, if we all refuse to receive anything, then how can people give it and fulfill their covenant? And so in verse 1 where it says, "Receive ye," that phrase is so important to me because in Greek, it's not just to receive, but to bring in, to fetch, to take hold of.
	00:48:44	So when somebody comes and says, "I know you're having a hard time. I'm here to help," we cleave to that person. We hold tight to them. That is what Paul is trying to encourage, is that don't always think of yourself as the strong one. It's okay to be weak at times and to accept that help. I needed that lesson, so if I didn't learn anything else from our discussion today or in preparation, it was I need to receive others when they're offering themselves to help me.
John Bytheway:	00:49:17	Wow. Years ago, Michael McLean that has been on our podcast before, he made a little movie called Nora's Christmas Gift. And

I remember that she was this super woman who was serving everybody, doing everything for everybody, always involved and energetic and everything, and then her health went bad. I think she was losing her eyesight, and she ends up in the tabernacle and hearing them sing Joy to the World. And the phrase, "Let Earth receive her king," for her, it meant it's my time to learn how to receive, and that was a hard lesson for her. She'd always been the one who was giving and serving, and she had to learn how to accept help and receive. It was a good story because I think if we're not there now, one day all of us will be in that place where we need to accept and receive charity from folks.

- Hank Smith: 00:50:17 It seems, Josh, that Paul is saying, if there's someone in your congregation that is weak in the faith, meaning... Maybe it's weak in the faith Paul himself has been talking about. They just can't quite work this out between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians, and they're still struggling. If there's people still struggling, don't argue with them these doubtful disputations. Don't go in guns blazing, ready to judge his opinions and get in a debate with him because it sounds like in verse 2 he's saying, some people have given up the Law of Moses entirely, they've been able to, that he may eat all things. Another, who is not quite convinced, maybe still is keeping those kosher laws, eateth herbs. And then he says, "We're all God's servants." Verse 4, "Who art thou to judge God's servant?" I really like that. Then you go over to verse 10. "Why do you judge your brother? Why do you set him at nought? You're going to give account of yourself to God?" That's in verse 12. So you want to fight over what you're going to eat, verse 17, the kingdom of God is not just meat and drink. It's not about what we eat and what we drink. It's righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost. Did I get that right?
- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:51:33 You got it exactly right, Hank. He's going to give some specific examples that would've related to both the Gentile and the Jewish Christians, but that's exactly the point. Salvation isn't going to care about whether you were right about an argument.
- Hank Smith: 00:51:51 Yeah.
- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:51:51 At the judgment bar, God's not going to ask how many arguments did you win with your neighbor or your brother or your in-law or anybody that way. That's not what God is going to tally at the end. He's going to tally whether or not we were willing to simply put that aside and to be persuaded and live unto the Lord, and if the Lord wants us to love one another, that's what it is. And I love that you led us right up to verse 18. In the King James, it says, "For he that in these things serveth

Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men." In the Greek, maybe a better translation that I might suggest is, "Anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and esteemed of men." And so that's what it is. It's not just doing the service. It's not just trying to do that, but doing it in this way, not exalting yourself over another, not doing it for recognition and not thinking that you're right and the other person's wrong, but simply serving God in this way so that it's righteousness, it brings peace, it brings joy. And then leads to 19, "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace."

00:52:59 And President Nelson's most recent general conference address in April 2023, Peacemakers Wanted, that's what Paul is talking about. Paul is saying, we want to be peacemakers. We want that peace to come. And I know we've done a lot of Book of Mormon cross-referencing. I wanted to try and make this as understandable for us who were a little more learned in the Book of Mormon, but in Mosiah 27:4, this really struck me. If we're going to have peacemakers, that's what they were trying to do in the new world anciently. And so here in Mosiah 27:4, "That they should no pride or haughtiness disturb their peace; that every man should esteem his neighbor as himself, laboring with their own hands for their support." The people were committed to not let things destroy the peace that they wanted, and that's what Paul is saying. Don't let your meals disturb the peace. And in some ways, he's saying, don't go to church and eat something that might offend your neighbors sitting next to you.

Hank Smith: 00:54:01 Yeah. You can do that much. You can say, well, it might offend them. Even though it's not necessarily wrong to do it, I'm not going to do it just so I don't offend this person for whom Christ died.

John Bytheway: 00:54:17 It totally reminds me of Jesus with Peter. Peter: "Of whom did the kings of the earth pay tribute? Should we have to pay?" Jesus says, "No, we don't have to but lest we should offend them."

Hank Smith: 00:54:29 Yeah. We don't want to offend them.

John Bytheway: 00:54:30 So why cause offense when you don't have to?

Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:54:33 I think we know that. I think of my own life, and regrettably, maybe I want to join Paul and say I have my own mistakes and shortcomings. I haven't been that way a lot. I love the fact that we can say that we're not the same that we used to be. I remember distinctly, and maybe this is my way of confessing a

little bit and maybe seeking forgiveness from those that I can't in other ways, I was terrible as a mission companion in that regard. I knew a lot about the scriptures. I knew a lot about rules and regulations about what we should do, and I oftentimes wasn't kind to my companions. I wasn't one who was willing to love my brother. I was more concerned about doing the right thing in the way that it was outlined, whatever the cost, and if that meant leaving a companion in the dust because I wanted to be right instead of kind. It's taken me a number of years to come to peace with those decisions.

00:55:36 But I want to say with Paul, it's happened. I know this isn't a personal podcast, but that's what I want to say. If there's anyone in my past that I've offended because I thought I was right, that I thought I knew better, and that I argued vehemently because of that, I'm sorry. And I think that's what Paul wants us to say and wants them to say to each other and say, I'm sorry, and let's move forward. There are some things I know I can't fix from my past, and I think that's how some of them felt. But with Jesus Christ, we can move forward, and he can fix that which we cannot fix.

John Bytheway: 00:56:09 I think this is such a powerful lesson, Josh, that both you and Paul are teaching here. What would President Monson say? Don't let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved or a rule to be kept become more important than a person to be loved.

Hank Smith: 00:56:29 It reminds me of a great story that President Packer shared one time when I was... Actually, it was a regional conference I think, and he gave this example. He said he was in a ward, and a priest in the ward was really struggling giving the sacrament prayers. I think I've shared this before, John. And probably very nervous. You've got an apostle there, and he just could not say those prayers right. And he got to the third time, and he messed up the third time. And the bishop wanting to get the prayers right, of course, was going to stand up and go over to the table to tell him what he was missing. As the bishop stood up, President Packer put his hand on his knee, and he said, "I think the Lord knows what he's trying to do." And the bishop then looked at him and just nodded to the priest, and the priest looked relieved, like, oh, I'm not going to do that again. And it reminds me of this chapter where Paul is saying people are the most important part of this, these people for whom Christ died, verse 15.

John Bytheway: 00:57:37 Thank you for sharing that, Josh. I know that's not easy, but I love that verse 15. The things which make for peace, that is the

outcome that we want. It's not that I will be proven to be right and you'll be proven to be wrong or whatever. The outcome is peace that we want. I like that idea of focusing on, what am I trying to do here? Well, what is the outcome that I really want? And thanks for bringing up President Nelson's talk there.

- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:58:05 As you said that, John, I just think of intentionality. Everything that we've studied today in Romans is meant to make people a little more intentional in what they do. I love the idea of, do I intentionally seek peace? Do I tell myself when I get in the car and drive down the freeway, I am not going to get contentious with anybody no matter what happens? And I think on the days that I intentionally do things like that, I don't find myself falling into that carnal, natural man tendency to want to respond, but I keep myself spiritually-minded because I've already made up my mind what I'm going to do. So let's intentionally choose to make peace with everyone that we interact with.
- John Bytheway: 00:58:46 Awesome.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:47 That's fantastic.
- Dr. Joshua Matson: 00:58:48 The rest of the epistle moves very quickly. It's the summation of everything that's been said. I could point out something that really hit me in chapter 15. In chapters 15 and 16, Paul is going to give five different titles for God. In 15:5, he calls him the God of patience. In 15:5, again, he's going to call him the God of consolation. In 15:13, he's going to call him the God of hope. In 15:15, he's going to imply that he's the God of grace by saying that the grace that has given me of God so that he's a God of grace or, again, going back to the word that we should think of from the very beginning, charis, the God of loving kindness. And then last, in 16:20 as he's finishing up, he calls him the God of peace. And so I just made this list because at the end of the day, when he is thinking of God, he's thinking of him as patient, consoling, hopeful, graceful, and peaceful, and I love that he's saying, if you really want to be like God, these are the things that you should exercise.
- 01:00:06 At the end of the day, after everything that we've talked about, after everything I've written, God exemplifies these characteristics, and I want you to have those characteristics in your life as well. That's what he is going to do throughout the end of these last two chapters. And then it ends in Romans 15:9-13. He comes straight out and says the destinies of the Jew and the Gentile are inextricably linked. You cannot separate the destiny of Jew and Gentile. You are intertwined. That's what the future is going to hold. So are you going to get on board, or are



you going to choose to stay away? And the God of patience, consolation, hope, grace, and peace wants you to join in, but he needs you to have those same characteristics with him.

Hank Smith: 01:00:54 Beautiful.

Dr. Joshua Matson: 01:00:55 So, Hank, as we're concluding and we look at chapter 16, some of us meaning myself, we get to the end of this, and we hurry and rush through the end of the chapter or the book. We go, I'm about to finish Romans. Oh, it's just a bunch of names, half of which I can't say. One thing that I just really think is important to point out is that each and every one of these names exemplifies the fact and gives us a window into what the makeup of the congregation was in the Christian Church in Rome. So it's a window to the social, ethnic, and gender diversity of the church. It's an exemplification of 2 Nephi 26:33. That's how I wrote it in my heading at chapter 16, that this is an invitation to all, male and female who were mentioned here. You get free and bond. Many of the names that you see in this list are names that would've been common for an enslaved person. And so you see free and slave. There are also ethnic markers that means that these people are from all over the Roman Empire, and so you've got those from various ethnic backgrounds.

01:02:03 If we hurry and read through it, we might just think, oh, that's nice, these people are cool. They're getting a shout-out from Paul. But it's not just that. This is the diversity of people that are in the church at Rome, and our church should look the exact same way. I'm partial to this. About two months ago, I had the opportunity to stand in a place called Conkria, which is on the east side away from Corinth. It was one of Corinth's ancient ports, and the reason I bring that up is I just want to talk about verse 1 and 2 real quick in chapter 16. "I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister, which is a servant." The word here is diakon, or where we get our word deacon, which is a servant of temporal things. And I love that when I think about our deacons and the Aaronic priesthood. The primary purpose of the Aaronic priesthood is to preside in temporal matters. For Phoebe to have this name of a deacon as a servant of the church, which is at Conkria.

01:03:02 In April, my wife and I had the opportunity to visit Conkria. All that's left there is a little bit of an ancient port and a harbor, but my wife and I had the opportunity to sit there and talk about Phoebe. And I think it's important to recognize the contribution that she had. She probably received this epistle in Corinth and went to the port at Conkria and got on a ship in Conkria and

sailed to Rome. Think of all that personal effort to get this letter to these Roman saints, not knowing how they would receive it, not knowing how she would be received given the cultural and social standing of women in that time. But for Paul to come out and say, "I commend you, Phoebe. Listen to what she has to say. She's going to bring this to you. She indeed is a servant of the church. She is one who has authority to say this," too often when we study the New Testament or the scriptures in general, women get pushed to the margins. And here, Phoebe, I just want to bring her to the center and show that she played an integral role in all of this taking place.

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| Hank Smith:        | 01:04:06 | That's fantastic, Josh. I'm grateful that you did that, that you pointed out Phoebe to us. And if you didn't know a little bit about what Paul was saying about her delivering this epistle, you would just read that verse and miss it completely. You've walked us through some incredible chapters, some difficult chapters. The application was wonderful. What do you hope our listeners, Josh, get out of your lesson today, these chapters today?   |
| Dr. Joshua Matson: | 01:04:36 | I hope that first and foremost that we'll see that at the center of all of this is our Savior Jesus Christ. It's because of his atoning sacrifice that we are able to be saved in any capacity. So if we've missed the Savior in our discussion, which I don't think that we have, we can very clearly see that the Savior is at the center of everything that we do, and because the Savior is at the center of everything that we do, we should do it as he does it. I hope that we come away from this with a desire to be a little more kind and to be a little more accepting and compassionate, whether it's the person on the road that we drive that maybe doesn't have the gospel in their life or any religion. Maybe it's our neighbor who believes differently than we do. |
|                    | 01:05:22 | We can still join together as one, whether they're in the church or out of the church. That's what Paul is ultimately saying, is our destinies in the end are inextricably linked. And whether we have the law or we don't have the law, talking now about the law of Christ and the new and everlasting covenant, there's a place for all of us together, and I hope that we walk away saying, I'm going to be a little bit better at loving and following the example of the Savior to love my neighbors as myself. And that will help me to walk with this spirit, to be able to do what God would have me do.  |
| John Bytheway:     | 01:05:55 | That was great. It also helps me see the challenges Paul had to deal with, how he taught them so beautifully. Thank you so much for being with us.   |

Hank Smith:	01:06:05	Just really wonderful, Josh. I am looking over these chapters saying I've got a lot to go back and understand, but I feel like you've given me such a good foundation to build on. Thank you for being here with us today, Josh, Dr. Matson.
Dr. Joshua Matson:	01:06:23	An absolute pleasure. Thank you for having me.
Hank Smith:	01:06:26	We love having you. We want to thank Dr. Josh Matson for being with us today. Incredible guest. 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 as we start a new book, 1 Corinthians, on Follow Him.
John Bytheway:	01:06:47	Today's transcripts, 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.
	01:07:14	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 Sorensen. We also love hearing from you, our friends and listeners.
Tisha Petit:	01:07:53	Hi. My name is Tisha Petit, and I have such a love for the Follow Him podcast. It's impossible to count the ways that this podcast has changed my life, but I have such a love for the scriptures. And for the first time in a long time, I am able to delve so much deeper, and I'm able to learn so much more, not just about the scriptures themselves, but about the background, about the culture. And it has been such an amazing experience. I feel like I'm in college again, and I can take what I'm learning back to my kids, my family. Another thing that this podcast has done for me is it has inspired me and helped me to realize how much I love teaching the gospel. I didn't major in teaching seminary, but I

would like to go back and teach seminary and teach these things that I have learned to other kids and teenagers, and I just love, love the podcast. I love Hank and John, and I love the people that are on week to week helping us all learn and understand more and strengthening my testimony of Jesus Christ.

## WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT PRAYER?



Hank Smith:	00:02	Hello everyone. Welcome to another FollowHIM Favorites. My name's Hank Smith, I'm here with John Bytheway. Hi, John.
John Bytheway:	00:08	Hi, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:09	John, you know the drill. We take one question from this week's Come, Follow Me lesson. The question this week comes from Romans 8 where Paul talks about prayer. John, how would you answer this question? Why do we pray? What's so important about it?
John Bytheway:	00:24	Well, that's a good question because sometimes we even get tripped up by, am I saying the right words or am I saying them in the right order? And things like that. And it is good to try to pray in the most reverent way and everything, but boy, just the fact that you get on your knees, opens up the door for the spirit to inspire you. There's a verse in Romans 8:26, I've always liked this. "Likewise, the spirit also helpeth our infirmities for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh the intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." I love that verse. That just says, just the very act of praying, even if, "Heavenly Father, I don't know what I need, but I feel the need to pray that the spirit knows." And to mix it with another scripture, the fact that you have come to knock and ask and seek means the Lord will open the door to you.
Hank Smith:	01:16	Beautiful. Isn't there a verse in Joseph Smith History that says, "I knelt down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God." That's one of the most simple definitions of prayer, I think. "Offer up the desires of my heart." If it's in your heart, talk about it. If it's something you've been pondering and thinking about, talk about that. And I think what Paul is trying to say here in Romans 8:26 John, is you don't have to worry so much about getting your words right, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought." If you're going to wait to say a perfect prayer, you're never going to pray. And God is going to accept your imperfect prayer because he knows your heart.

John Bytheway:	01:56	Yeah. I think that the Lord's not going to say, "Oh, nope, you got your thee, thou, thines mixed up. I'm sorry, I'm not listening anymore." Oh, no he's going to hear our simplest prayer and we might get nervous about it if it's at church or in front of people, but I just think that's such a good way for us to open ourselves up to the influence of the spirit. It's not so that we can say, "I said my prayers." We pray so that the influence of the spirit can teach us and affect us and heal us, I think.
Hank Smith:	02:25	Yeah. It's not a checklist item, it's a way to bring your will to line it up with the Lord's will. And Paul says in "Verse 28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." So that's the most important part, is coming with a love of God to your prayers and everything else will work out. It'll work itself out.
John Bytheway:	02:46	That's another great verse. God is so good at making even our hard things work together for good. He's expert at that.
Hank Smith:	02:54	Yeah. Verse 35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Prayer is always open to you. You are never unworthy to pray or disqualified from praying. Prayer is always available to you. Nothing can separate you from that love of Christ that is available to you through prayer.
John Bytheway:	03:11	And if you've messed up, tell him, he knows already.
Hank Smith:	03:15	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	03:15	"Heavenly father, I messed up."
Hank Smith:	03:17	You know it and I know it. So if you're wondering, can I pray? Should I pray? What should I pray for? John And I would encourage you to just start, just get started and the spirit's going to help you and you're going to figure it out and hopefully you'll come to love prayer. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast, it's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts and then come back next week and join us for another FollowHIM Favorites.