



“For the Perfecting of the Saints”

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 conversion rely upon revelation and revelators? Dr. Matthew Richardson examines Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, discusses conversion, and how God reveals mysteries through revelation to His children.

Part 2:

Dr. Matthew Richardson discusses the importance of revelation to become truly converted to Jesus Christ and why we wear “the whole armor of God.”

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Matthew Richardson
- 01:56 Introduction of Dr. Matthew Richardson

- 03:39 The city of Ephesus
- 05:52 Roman armor
- 08:27 Paul's introduction to the letter
- 09:59 Come, Follow Me beginnings
- 13:44 Paul and Mormon parallels
- 14:07 Dr. Richardson shares a personal story about his dad's letters
- 15:47 Becoming a new creature
- 17:14 Predestination and the fabric of conversion
- 22:49 Magic vs mysteries
- 24:59 Conversion and great mysteries
- 27:25 God shares all
- 29:04 "Unfolding the Mysteries through Revelation"
- 30:40 Lehi as a "visionary man"
- 34:58 Paul is a "prisoner of Christ"
- 38:01 God's answers aren't fast
- 40:17 Dr. Richardson shares a personal story about love
- 44:07 The dispensation of the fulness of times
- 47:02 Administration of the gospel
- 49:46 the last days and "knowledge of truth"
- 51:17 Distractions
- 52:42 Crisis vs decision
- 54:56 Dr. Richardson shares a story about Elder Eyring
- 57:59 Conversion and commitment
- 58:58 Dr. Richardson shares a story about his recent mission
- 59:42 Marriage vows and misunderstanding Paul's words
- 1:04:52 Children of light and reverence
- 1:08:21 Prophets are for our benefit
- 1:11:16 Dr. Richardson shares a personal story about President Nelson
- 1:12:40 No more strangers in Christ and remove bias and prejudice
- 1:16:22 End of Part 1–Dr. Matthew Richardson

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Matthew Richardson
- 00:07 Dr. Richardson shares a personal story about the power of the gospel
- 2:00 Unity and one body
- 03:39 Grace
- 05:08 C.S. Lewis and the scissors analogy
- 09:25 Gratitude and not boasting
- 11:27 Jesus enacts uncomfortable change
- 13:36 Remaining close to the Spirit
- 15:58 We are called to be a light
- 18:50 Let God prevail
- 21:13 Putting off our natural tendencies

- 22:52 Being receptive to revelation
- 25:29 A great wrestle
- 26:45 Honoring parents
- 29:16 Why we don the “whole armor of God”
- 35:59 Protecting and defending
- 38:45 Protecting our thoughts
- 41:06 The mysteries will be solved through revelation and revelators
- 43:38 The power of the sacrament
- 47:59 Not the “hoodie of happiness”
- 49:19 Having the Spirit with us
- 51:51 It’s not a burden, it’s a quest
- 54:21 Strength in numbers
- 56:08 The Atonement of Jesus Christ and the role of the Spirit
- 57:56 President Eyring on “no more strangers”
- 1:00:54 A warning from Paul and final message
- 1:06:36 End of Part II—Dr. Matthew Richardson

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Biographical Information:



Matthew O. Richardson is a professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. He recently returned from serving as the President of the Minnesota Minneapolis Mission with his wife Lisa J. Richardson. Prior to serving in Minnesota, Richardson was a Vice President at Brigham Young University where he oversaw BYU Athletics, BYU Broadcasting, University Communications, Alumni, Special Events, and numerous other general university administrative duties. He served as the second counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Richardson completed doctorate, master's, and bachelor's degrees at Brigham Young University. As a young man, he served a full-time mission for his Church in Copenhagen, Denmark. Sister Richardson was raised in Seattle Washington. The Richardsons met at BYU and graduated together. They have four children and have seven grandchildren.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:03	Hello, my friends, welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, I'm your host. I'm here with my wonderful co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	Thanks, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:00:12	This is going to be a good day, John. I can feel it. We are going to be in the book of Ephesians today. John, have you ever read Ephesians? What are you looking forward to?
John Bytheway:	00:00:20	Just this last year got to go there, and it was so fun to relive the story of going into that big amphitheater there. Great is Diana of the Ephesians, so it's fun to see in Acts, Paul goes there and then he writes a letter to them and it's fun to connect what did he see and then, did that affect what he wrote to them later?
Hank Smith:	00:00:41	Yeah, I remember memorizing in seminary, Ephesians 4, "He gave some apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors," this is one I've always remembered. John, we have a fantastic guest with us today, a brilliant scriptorian. His name is Dr. Matt Richardson. Matt, I know you've written some on Ephesians. What are we looking forward to today?
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:01:02	Ephesians is a wonderful letter, but in so many ways it's really nice if we can read a little bit in between the lines. So, I'm hoping that today we'll see the obvious and see the things that Paul points out, the things the seminary students have memorized, and be able to see that. But I'm hoping we can also get a flavor of a grander vision or at least some of the things, threads, if you will, part of that great fabric that Paul is weaving together and see some of the principles, not just the practices that he mentions specifically. I'm really thrilled about this, it's an exciting book. It's a book that is meant not just to be read but to be contemplated and then put into play by the way that we live. It's a disciple's book, I'm excited.
Hank Smith:	00:01:44	Oh, how fantastic. John, Matt is new to our podcast. I've been wanting him on for years, he just hasn't been available. I know

that you and he go way back. Can you introduce him to our audience?

- John Bytheway: 00:01:56 Yes. Matt was a great mentor to me and a lot of other EFY counselors back in the day and was one of our favorite faculty back at EFY, so I'm calling him Matt, I need to say, Dr. Matthew O. Richardson. And also helped me in my master's program, so I'm really glad to see him back and you'll understand why I say see him back as I read this bio. As a young man, he served his mission in Denmark. He received degrees from BYU in communications, education and leadership, and curriculum, and a doctorate in educational leadership. In CES he taught in the church educational system from 1986 to 1993, joined the religion faculty at BYU in 1996. He received the Robert J. Matthews Teaching Award from April of 2009 to 2014.
- 00:02:48 He also served as the second counselor to Russell T. Osguthorpe in the church's general Sunday school presidency. So, that's why some of you may recognize, "Hey, I think I've seen him speak in General Conference." Then in 2020, he was called to serve as mission leader with his wife Lisa, to Minneapolis, Minnesota. So, he's now back from that mission assignment and back in religious education again, so we're really glad to have you back. Did I miss anything in that bio there, Matt?
- Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:03:18 You probably gave away too much. Most people have fallen asleep by now, but you did not miss anything and it's a pleasure to be here. Thank you for inviting me and I'm hoping that we can see some things today.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:29 Yeah, John, I've been waiting. I've been waiting. I think at the airport, there was Matt's family and then I was right behind him going, "Do you want to be on followHIM Matt?"
- John Bytheway: 00:03:35 Yeah. "Do you want to be on a podcast?"
- Hank Smith: 00:03:39 Yeah. Welcome back, welcome back. Let's get started. All right, let me read a little bit from the manual, Matt, and then we're going to hand it over to you and see what you want to do. The manual has a great introduction here. It says, "When the gospel began to spread in Ephesus, it caused no small stir" that's from Acts 19 "among the Ephesians. Local craftsmen who produced shrines to a pagan goddess saw Christianity as a threat to their livelihood," I remember talking about this, John, "and soon they were full of wrath and the whole city was filled with confusion. Imagine being a new convert to the gospel in such a setting.

00:04:12 Many Ephesians did accept and live the gospel amid this uproar, and Paul assured them that Christ is our peace. These words, along with his invitation to let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away, seem as timely and comforting now as they were then. For the Ephesians, as for each of us, the strength to face adversity comes in the Lord, and in the power of his might." That's a great introduction, Matt. Let's turn it over to you. Where do you want to go with Ephesians?

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:04:39 John, you've been there and so you've seen some of the geography of the area and you can almost capture, you have to use your imagination to capture what it was like because the amphitheater that you mentioned is large and you can imagine what it was like in its day, very impressive. Some of the historians when they talk about Ephesus and they look at that, they're saying, "Look, this was not just a city, but it was a beautiful city." I mean it's a port city, so there's a lot of trade that's going on. Now, the reason I bring this up is because it's important to have context because Paul does not just write a letter and send it out en masse.

00:05:12 He's writing letters, what we like to call often epistles, to individual saints, and so they're flavored with what's taking place in their lives, Hank, as you were mentioning and describing what it would've been like to be a convert. But this is a port city, Roman industry was prevalent. As a matter of fact, they described Ephesus, one of the things I liked about the description is when they talked about the promenade, the main street in Ephesus, and they said, "This isn't just nice, this is the most splendid," this is the quote, "splendid street in the Roman Empire." This is a beautiful city temporally speaking, but it also becomes an oasis for those who are looking for something of more substance beyond the temporal.

00:05:52 It has the Roman influence, hence, when we start to talk about it, and I'm hoping we'll look at the Armor of God, this is where you start to see the Armor of God imagery. Paul in his visit, he knew the Roman influence, but he also knew that everyone in Ephesus could see what the legions were like. They would come into port; they would march to different areas. So, when you start to talk about armor, especially armor of the day, you're looking at something that the imagery would be very vivid and ripe for the people at that time, but also Paul can use it in a masterful way in his teaching to be able to teach principles and points.

- 00:06:27 This is an amazing city. It has a tremendous Greek influence as well. Sometimes we think that the Roman Empire, they ruled all thought, but they were heavily influenced by the Greek philosophy and thought as well. This is really almost a potpourri, it's a mixing pot where you mix a lot of these things that are taking place at the time from trade, industry, artisans, a lot of violence in some ways, persecution that would take place. I think it's important to point out that when you start to look at the saints in Ephesus, these are mostly all converts of course, but they're Gentiles.
- 00:07:01 For me, that flavors, when you start to look at the discussion about one of the great mysteries of the Gentiles and the Jews coming together in the family of God. So, when you see Paul, and we'll get more into this one talking about strangers and foreigners, he's writing to the former strangers and foreigners, those who have left the life of the Gentile so to speak, and they're now part of the family. So, this is an amazing letter. I think that it's worth noting here that you see a lot of Paul obviously in the way that he's styling and writing this. He's sensitive to those that he's writing to, he's also sensitive to the needs, and so he's not afraid to give some straight out, great, bold advice.
- 00:07:45 David Barr, who is a New Testament scholar, he wrote a line once in one of his books when he was talking about the Pauline Epistles or the letters of Paul, and he said, I'm going to quote this because I just like his wording on this. He said, "Paul's letters are always vigorous expressions of his person." Now I know we're doing Ephesians, but when you start to think of that one, what David Barr was saying is, "Boy, when you start to read the letters of Paul, if you think about Paul writing these letters or those that are attributed to Paul, you start to say, I like that line, "You see a vigorous expression of the person that we call Paul." I mean it's really a fascinating thought.
- 00:08:27 So, Paul does this in all of his letters. He'll do an introduction of himself and he used different descriptors of himself, like he calls himself, "The stalk of Israel from the tribe of Benjamin, the untimely born," when he is writing to the Corinthians, and then he gets vigorous into this, and what he means by that is my birth is not the normal type and my path is not the normal type. He's not just talking about his heritage birth, but of course, his conversion birth, being born again. He says, "I'm an apostle to the Galatians." He says, "I'm the one to bring obedience to the saints. I'm the bond servant." In Ephesians, we'll see that he talks about being a prisoner of Christ, and some people they get hung up on that descriptor right off the bat and they'll say, "Oh,

he's wishing to escape," or, "He thinks that it's a burden to be part of Christ," and that's not Paul at all.

00:09:16 This is a vigorous expression of him as a person. He's saying, "Look, when I joined, when I became born into this, and I had the rebirth of experience, my passion and vigor was still there as it was in my pre-conversion." Then he says, "But I'm not going anywhere. I locked my heart into this, throw away the key," and when he uses the word, prisoner, it's not a bad thing. He's talking about it's a self-chosen place that he's going to be, and he will never leave as if a prisoner cannot leave. This is a beautiful way to start to look at, I think, is Paul's letters and saying, don't forget the man who is writing it, the apostle, the servant who is writing it and the way that he's doing it, and that's why I like David Barr's description.

00:09:59 It's a vigorous expression of who he is and you can tell he loves the Lord because in every one of his letters, and Ephesians is no exception, as a matter of fact, you see it almost effusive throughout this book, which is what roughly 155 verses, but yet it just oozes of his vigor and love of his discipleship for Jesus Christ. One last side note on this one is John mentioned that I served in the general Sunday school presidency. It was during the time where Come, Follow Me was actually being developed. I thought I would just throw that out there because the way that this started to come about was, we would meet with prophets, seers, and revelators. Honestly, it's a time that I will never forget where they were impassioned.

00:10:45 Do you want to talk about vigorous expressions of individuals, is they were impassioned about their concern for the wellbeing of the saints of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and all those who would love to come and follow the Savior, Jesus Christ. The discussion when it started to the whole process of how Come, Follow Me was developed was we need to get conversion deep into the hearts of the saints. It wasn't, "We need them to know more. We need them to know about the Savior more and we forgot to tell them this or that. We need to tell them more of the standards, the practices, and the principles of the gospel." It was, "How do we help individuals receive the gospel into their lives and where it goes?"

00:11:30 This is a phrase that President Nelson who was directing some of this and then Robert D. Hales, Elder Hales, they used this phrase all the time, "Get it deep in the hearts of the saints." I remember during that time we would get assignments and so we'd be together with all the general officers of the church, a General Relief Society, General Young Womens', General

Primary, General Young men and the Sunday school, and Elder Hales would say, "We need to talk about conversion, so I want you to go home and read your scriptures about conversion and I want you to send me what you find. It needs to be about six pages long. I don't want less than six because that means you didn't think very much about it, but I don't want more than six because I don't have time to read them."

00:12:11 And I remember at the time, Julie Beck was the General Relief Society President. We were sitting next to each other, and we looked at each other and we said, "We're getting homework from an apostle. We're getting a homework assignment." And there was part of me that I wanted to raise my hand, "Is this double-spaced? How wide are the margins?"

John Bytheway: 00:12:28 What's the font size? Yeah.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:12:31 Exactly. It was a great challenge because we went back into the scriptures and each of us went and had the experience to look for conversion and what was taking place in the scriptural experiences, the admonitions, the historical context, and say, "What was happening with conversion?" Because everything was focused on getting the gospel deep in the hearts of the saints. So, when you think about that, at least I do, this is the way my brain works. That's the way that this started to unfold is helping individuals see what they're doing, helping them exercise their own agency. Paul is a pretty good Come, Follow Me apostle, and he does this in Ephesians, and you'll see that it's almost like here's the Come, Follow Me lesson for the Ephesians for the time.

00:13:17 And he gives great admonitions, but it was never the intent to say, "You need to know the following things in these 155 verses." The intent was, let me give you some things that is intended for you to personally say, "Now what will I do with those and let them go deep into my heart through my understanding, through my living, and through my practice." And that's why I like this thought of look at what's happening in this wonderful, wonderful book.

Hank Smith: 00:13:44 Yeah, when you mentioned we get to know Paul through his writing, I thought of The Book of Mormon and with Mormon, initially, we don't know anything about him when he starts writing, and so we have to get to know him through how he writes until we eventually get to The Book of Mormon in The Book of Mormon, then we can start learning about him. But beforehand, you only get to know him through the way he

writes, and you really can get to know someone through the way they organize their thoughts.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:14:07

That's a super good point. As a matter of fact, this is a little bit on the opposite side from the academic side for those who look at the veracity of Paul's letters and they'll say, "What's the authorship of this?" Hank, to your point is the way they do that is through their voice of the way that they write so many times. So, can you get to know someone through their writings? Yes. I remember one time I was going through my mom and dad's attic trying to get things out and stuff and help clean up, find my old junk and things. I found this old, tattered box and I pulled it out and opened it up and it was filled with letters. And they were letters that my father had written to my mother when they were courting. He was from Texas; she was from Utah. They met right after World War II while he was debriefing from the war, et cetera. They met and then he wrote these letters.

00:14:57

Oh, my gosh, I thought I knew my father. But then I started reading these letters and I saw a different side of my father where I started to see a tenderness and a love and a gooeyness and like, "Who is this person?" But I remember sitting up there and at times, I was very emotional reading these letters, I could feel through what he was writing, how he was writing in the context I came to know him. And I think that this is the beauty of scriptures is when we allow ourselves, we come to know prophets, seers, and revelators, we know these apostles and those who are writing by the way that they talk about things. And Paul was a passionate, vigorous man, and he was not afraid to be able to share. That doesn't mean that he was bold to the point where he'd push people away. He was passionate, for me, he was a believer, and I knew he was a believer the first time I read anything that he wrote.

John Bytheway: 00:15:47

Yeah, I love this. Thank you for talking about the idea of conversion. I feel like the idea of becoming, instead of just knowing and doing, but becoming something different is something we're talking about more and more I think in the church. I love that Paul, he uses this phrase and he already used it in some of the previous things we studied, but of becoming a new creature. It's not just, "I'm a better person than I was. I'm a new creature, I'm a new creation." And conversion is changing from one thing to another. And when we think about Paul and his road to Damascus, wow, that was a huge change for him. So, I love this idea of him writing this, Paul who had such an experience and had to become a whole different creature.

- Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:16:35 And isn't it interesting that when you talk about this new creature transition, this deep conversion changing of who we are, not just our location, but who we are, our thought process, our desires, et cetera, in Ephesians, he uses an interesting concept here where on several times he uses the term where we look at it, for example, in chapter 1 in verse 5, he says, "Having predestined us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of Christ's will." So, this predestined term comes up. You see that again a little bit later in chapter 2 in verse 10. It talks, "God hath before ordained."
- 00:17:14 Now, some people think that predestined is what we use it by today's standards as predestination, it's predetermined, we have no agency, it's already determined. But the way Paul talks about this is because when you start to look at it in the Greek, it's predefined is what it means. It's not predetermined, it's predefined or in other words, it's preordained. So, here's a crazy, wild thought is, and I'm glad you brought this up, John. So, we talk about conversion of becoming new creatures in Jesus Christ. And the way Paul says it here is according to the adoption by Jesus Christ. So, it's not that we make ourselves new creatures, it's we make ourselves available to He who changes all things and we become new in Him.
- 00:18:01 It's like in The Book of Mormon where we become perfected in Jesus Christ. Not because we did something special and we're all that and too many of us, myself included, we're constantly on the treadmill of perfection and grinding and saying, "I'm not good enough." And I like every once in a while, throughout the writings of the New Testament is like James will say is, "We'll come to know Jesus Christ and you'll be surprised. He's a lot like us and you're a lot like Him, probably closer to being like Him than you think you are." Because we're so busy about this concept of perfection. But yet here Paul is writing this because he's experienced it and he uses this fore-ordination, pre-ordained to become new to us, but maybe old to the vision of our Father in heaven who knew what we could become in the very beginning.
- 00:18:53 And you think of patriarchal blessings, and you think of all the blessings that we receive at the hand of the power of our Father in heaven, and it's almost like He's rekindling who we used to become and giving us visions of times forgotten and He's saying, "Come home. Come home and be who you were fore-ordained, not predetermined who you would become but who you choose to become through this wonderful, glorious plan of salvation process and you will be new. But to me, you'll be the

person that I knew you could always become." It's really a beautiful concept and this is conversion, and it has to be personal, conversion is personal.

00:19:34 It always drives me crazy when I hear missionaries talk about, "The mission, when I served the mission when I was on the mission," I'm like, "Well, what mission is that?" It's like sometimes when I hear spouses talk about each other, "Well, let me go talk to the wife." I'm like, "What is the wife?" I mean, are there several or is this the wife above other ones? What are you talking about the wife? It sounds so impersonal, and I tell our missionaries, "I hope that you'll never refer to this as the mission." This needs to be your mission. It needs to be my mission. It is our mission because everything about the Gospel of Jesus Christ is personal, and conversion is a deeply personal experience, and it changes as we change, and it deepens as we pay the price.

00:20:26 And so, this is beautiful when you start to look at Paul writing about conversion, he's telling a story, inviting in certain terms, everyone to say your path may be a little bit different, and I'm going to give you a broad range. Here he's with the Ephesians, and he's saying, "Look, here we go. You ready for this? This is going to be personal." Now, as mentioned, this is written to converts, converts who are Gentiles and how are they doing in this sea of a mess with philosophies, with trade from Romans, the emphasis on temporal goods, power in their face all the time, maybe oppression, suppression from their peers as well as from politicians, group leaders, power mongers. How are they doing?

00:21:07 Apparently, they're doing pretty well. As a matter of fact, look in chapter 1, by the time you start to go through and you look at verse 11, it says, "We have obtained an inheritance being predestined," predefined, pre-ordained, "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will that we should be to the praise of Christ's glory entrusted in God." Then he says this, the end of verse 13 he says, "The gospel of your salvation in whom after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." That's like saying, "Hey, you guys are doing okay. It seems that we have a range here of those who are coming into the fold learning how to be saints, learning to grow into it. And then you have individuals here," at least according to Paul's words, "who have been sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

00:22:04 Some like to call that the calling and election, I mean, sure Peter talks about this. These are individuals that aren't iffy and maybe

they'll be here tomorrow. These are people who have become converted, not just converts, meaning they joined the church. So, right off the bat, in my opinion, Paul is writing to converts and he's saying "Joining is not enough. That's the beginning. Welcome aboard. You're part of the household of faith." So, when you start to read through things like no more strangers, you're like going, "Oh my gosh, he's really giving this beautiful sermon. And all of these verses actually are the threads that weave together, and they make this beautiful convert, not as in membership but conversion fabric."

00:22:49 Ephesus was also a place where there were a lot of magicians. I know this is going to sound weird, but it was a theatrical place and there was this concept of magic and mystery surrounding that one. "Oh, how did you do that?" "Well, it's magic." So, when Paul arrives in the Book of Acts, there's some individuals who consider him to be yet another of the many magicians, he's talking about magical things or mysterious things. And so, with that in mind, it should be no surprise to those who know a little bit about this hodgepodge of a gathering with all these influences, if this is a home of the David Copperfields of the time, and if you want to go see a good magic show, go to the amphitheater there and you're going to see some great entertainment. You see, it's magic.

00:23:35 But Paul shows up and it's not magic necessarily, it's miraculous. And he talks about the miracles of Jesus Christ. But here's the part of it is what surrounds magic, and I don't know a whole lot about this, but is a slight of hand, it's keeping things on a mysterious thing where we don't tell you our secrets. We're not going to show you how we did that trick because then you'll lose the magic of it all and it becomes easily explained. But I like that the concept here is what Paul does is he talks about mysteries. When you look at the book of Ephesians and you start to jump in there, this is an important concept, mysteries, and what that would mean to these people.

00:24:15 We're not talking about magic; we're talking about mysteries. And mysteries is a little bit of a difficult thing to understand because sometimes we say, "This is mysterious, I don't understand it," but then we start to read into things like we cannot understand it. And so, one of the great mysteries Paul will talk about is the relationship, the intimate relationships, when I say intimate, I'm talking about emotional, all aspects of it, of married life, specifically. The relationship between a husband and wife who are converts, working towards conversion, conversion to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but also conversion to one another. I hope that makes sense, it's not a

competing element, but learning to be converted to your spouse.

00:24:59 This is one of the things I love about the Gospel of Jesus Christ is this was not intended to be a Sunday experience. It teaches us, and once again, John, thanks for bringing this up, to become new creatures where we see things differently. It's not our membership. We see people differently. We see ourselves differently. We see life differently. And part of that extends into this great mystery Paul brings up about marriage, is seeing a spouse differently, becoming converted or changed in that way, and he gives tremendous advice. But some people say, "I can't figure this whole marriage thing out. It is a mystery. Women, they're mysterious to me. Men, they are the grand mystery." And really in that frustration, what we're saying is, "I don't understand it. I can't understand it, and it's mysterious, so therefore it cannot be known."

00:25:52 But when Paul starts to talk about mysteries, he talks about the relationships of Gentiles and Jew or the household of faith. He talks about marriage between a husband and a wife in the household of that faith, and then he starts to talk about other elements of the mystery of what happens in a dispensation of the fullness of times, and how is that supposed to work in the world that we live where there's a constant tension between the world where we're living and the world that Christ would like us to live in. It's mysterious and most of us, we throw our hands up in the air and we're like going, "I've tried this. Don't tell me to pray. I remember I prayed once when I was 16 and it didn't work." So, I guess it's not knowable. I know how this goes. I work on this every day in my life as well, but we're all in this experience.

00:26:42 This is the life of a disciple or becoming converted is how do you stay in the game and don't give up when you're seeking to find answers? It's mysterious and yet natural man in all of us, there's a tendency to give up. So, what should we do in times where we feel we don't have the strength? Read Ephesians, try Ephesians on for size because this is a whole spectrum of saints who are on the road to conversion and some are doing so great that it says that it comes down, they're sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and others who are just joined and they're getting their house burned down by their neighbors who are upset or threatened, as was pointed out earlier.

00:27:25 This is a great little book when we talk about mysteries Paul uses that term at least on four occasions throughout this short little book of scriptures right here, or the short letter. He talks

about mysteries. But keep in mind that in Greek, when we look at that, when we talk about things that are mysteries, the Greek word for that when you start to look at musterion is a secret. It's a secret. And some people say, "Yeah, it's a secret God won't share." That's contrary to everything that Paul has taught. Everything that prophets, seers, and revelators from every time period, dispensation of time comes down to have taught that's not the case. Sure, there are things that are not revealed openly at first, but God, I don't know if He's a good businessman, He shares all the company secrets and He'll tell you the secret formula for the secret sauce and He will reveal his secrets. It's not a secret.

00:28:16 So, it's not that it's unknowable, it's revealed. And then the question comes, and welcome to Ephesians, how does God reveal His mysteries? How does He reveal His secrets? And this is one of the reasons for me personally that I love the book of Ephesians is he talks about the economy or the administration, the way that He reveals His great mysteries or the great miracles, and that of course is going to be done through prophets, seers, revelators, pastors, evangelists and individuals that are not telling people what to do, but they're the great revealers, revealers.

Hank Smith:

00:29:04 Matt, this is going to be a little bit odd, but I'm going to quote you back to you. This is an article that you wrote for the RSC, that's the Religious Study Center, John, we talk about the RSC all the time. We hope our listeners will go to the RSC. It's just rsc.byu.edu. And there's this article by Matt Richardson called Ephesians Unfolding the Mysteries through Revelation. This paragraph, as I read this before the interview, this jumped out at me and then you started talking about it. So, I'm going to quote you back to you.

00:29:36 You wrote, "Thus, at least textually, we know that a mystery can be known. But Paul's letter to the Ephesians did more than teach that God knows the answers even though He may not be revealing what they are. Paul taught the Ephesians that Christ had made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in himself. More than just knowing all things, Paul taught, as Elder Neal A. Maxwell said, 'Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are actually giving away the secrets of the universe.'"

00:30:08 And then just one more paragraph, "Paul later teaches that it was by revelation that the mysteries were made known to him. President Harold B. Lee also connected revelation with mysteries. He said, 'Mystery cannot be known except by

revelation.' With this connection in mind, no wonder Jacob warned us that we must not despise the revelations of God, for no man knoweth of His ways save it be revealed unto him." I'm guessing that's going to be probably a little bit of what we talk about today is those mysteries can be known by revelation.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:30:40

But how do you beat Elder Maxwell or the scriptures that talk about this? As a matter of fact, if there's one common thread through all scriptures, it's that very essence is, "Look, I understand and I'm here and I want to tell you, I want to help you." It's fascinating. You go to The Book of Mormon, and you look at Lehi's family. So, your father is a prophet. In other words, he's a revealer, so to speak, a revelator. And it's not like he's necessarily just talking about new, unknown concepts. He's revealing things that have been known in the ages. He's sharing God's secrets and God's sharing those through his prophet.

00:31:15

He comes home and he tells the family and isn't it interesting Laman and Lemuel's reaction to their dad is they call him a visionary man, but the way they say it is, "Dad's a visionary man," it's an insult. But Nephi's over there going, "My dad's a visionary man," same concept, different places for these individuals. One's looking at it as, "You are telling me what to do. This doesn't jive with my world." Laman and Lemuel. You have Nephi and Sam who are over there going, "You are sharing God's secrets and telling us how we can have greater joy in our lives, it's not jiving with my world. So, what do I need to do to be able to come to this mysterious outcome?"

00:31:58

And we do this today. I mean, we read The Book of Mormon, and poor Laman and Lemuel get a bad rap. And it's like, "I was like Laman and Lemuel yesterday," is we despise the prophets. If you look at the purpose of General Conference, when I was younger, I thought General Conference was a great time because you get to go to church in your pajamas and you don't have to leave the couch and you can get treats. And then do you remember Elder Richard G. Scott? He was so intent when he'd speak at a conference, he'd look into the camera, and you knew he was looking at your soul. You never went to get a drink of water when Elder Scott was speaking because there's a chance he might say, "Hey, hey, you get back."

John Bytheway: 00:32:33

"Sit back down."

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:32:34

Yeah, exactly. But why do we go to the effort and the tremendous, it's a tremendous effort and the cost to provide an opportunity every six months for a General Conference is so that we can have a chance to hear statistics? Well, that's

interesting, but I think that it's the revelators, it's the days of revelation where in Ephesus, the mysteries are being revealed through the designated prophet even at Paul's time when it comes down through prophets, seers, and revelators. So, for example, look in chapter 1, it comes in, it says here in verse 9, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure in which He has purposed in Himself."

00:33:24 So, it's not like He says, "Maybe I'll tell you some." In His good pleasure, I think is similar to scriptures as talks about in His due time and in His way. But bottom-line, core to this is mysteries are being revealed and He has made known unto us the mysteries. For me and a lot of my experiences when I get into trouble in the process, here's the process I'm telling you how mysteries are revealed. In my own due time and according to my good pleasure for your good. Paul talks about, "I'm not going to give you meat before your milk. I'm going to make it so that you can come." Book of Mormon talks about it, line upon line, precept upon precept. And then this is funny after that orderly mention, then it says, "Oh yeah, and here a little, and there a little according to my good pleasure."

00:34:15 But His pleasure, think of His pleasure When you go to the Pearl of Great Price, my work, my glory, my pleasure is bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of Father's creations. That's my work and that's my pleasure. So, His pleasure is never to withhold, but it's to reveal in ways that it will be able to go deep into the heart, and sometimes we need to do a lot of milk and sometimes we need to do a little bit of milk toast and a little bit of meat, et cetera. But the theme here I love is He has made known, verse 9, the mysteries. I'm going to tell you about that.

00:34:58 So, in chapter 3, here it comes down and he says, "For this cause," all the introduction that I gave in chapter 1, I love these little statements in scripture, and I think it's important. So, whenever you see the word therefore or wherefore starting in a verse, I think it's important to pause and say, "What is he talking about?" That is usually because of this that I've already taught you."

John Bytheway: 00:35:19 Yeah, I just said that.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:35:21 So, sometimes it's good to reread and say, oh, so since he talked about the mysteries revealed the promises and et cetera, because of all these things, he says, "I am a prisoner of Christ." And now this is the Joseph Smith Translation. It says, "Prisoner of Jesus Christ among you Gentiles." The regular King James

Version says, "Christ for you Gentiles." I like this translation here, he's saying, I'm one of you. I've been to Ephesus, I visited, and by the way, I am on my conversion path also. I love that change that Joseph Smith offered is I am the prisoner of Jesus Christ. I'm not going anywhere. I'm here to the end. I'm not trying to get out and I'm among you Gentiles.

00:36:08 And then in verse 2, it says, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God," Joseph Smith Translation says, verse 2 starts as, "For the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to your word" verse 3, I'm still reading the Joseph Smith Translation, okay? "As ye have heard that by revelation, He made known unto me the mystery of Christ as I wrote before in a few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge," my experience, that's my wording, "my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and the prophets by the spirits." Then it comes down, look at this transition. I love transitions in the scriptures, and I'm not saying this is right. This just helps me to order them.

00:37:09 As verse 6 starts with the word that sometimes it helps me to go through and it says, "Well, we're talking. And when a verse starts with that, sometimes for me it's helpful to say, so," so, he teaches all this, and then it comes down to verse 6, so that here's the reason why I'm telling you this, "so that the Gentiles would be fellow heirs of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. Wherefore, I was made a minister," a minister, "according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." And then he goes on, isn't this lovely? So, here he's talking about something that's really important. He says, "Look, mysteries have been revealed to me, and I'm going to help you to understand what I've come to know, the mysteries that I've come to know so that you can come to know them too, but they will be revealed and it's going to come in His pleasure." verse 5.

00:38:01 "It hasn't been done in other ages, but now it's done because the timing is right for it to be received." Surely both of you and all of those who are listening, who are working through their conversion, have had experiences where they have wrestled with coming to a knowledge, coming to an understanding, coming to an answer where they're praying, and then it comes at a later time. And for most of us, it's like, "You could have told me 10 months ago what was the wait for?" It was His pleasure not to show that He's in charge necessarily or to torture, but I look back at my life, it's usually when I was complaining that it

didn't come fast enough, I look back and I understand that when it came, it came at the right time. I had to be a little more humble, open to receive, or I didn't have sufficient knowledge perhaps to understand what He was telling me or the experience. Does that make sense? Any thoughts on that?

Hank Smith: 00:38:56 Yeah, my students and I think me too, we're so used to quick answers now. It used to be when I was a kid, you at least had to go to the library and get an encyclopedia if you wanted to find out about something. But now I just typed Ephesians into a Google search and it says, it found me 50,600,000 results in 0.42 seconds, and I need all 50 million of those because I'm going to go through each one. And you're telling me here that the things of God often come slowly and line upon line, here a little, there a little. These two worlds of quick answers versus God's answers, those are going to butt up against each other more and more as time goes on.

John Bytheway: 00:39:34 I like to tell my students, I say, "My worry about Gen Z is you want Google speed answers to golden questions," and every testimony begins with a test and every question begins with a quest. And sometimes God doesn't answer that quickly. I love what you're saying about mysteries here because I think one definition of a mystery is kind of a throw up your hands, it's a mystery, but I was thinking as you were talking about a mystery novel. There's a solution, but you've got to go through it, and you'll figure it out at the end. And I'm going back to Paul, and I don't know, this really touched me when Paul was in Athens and was, "Let me declare the unknown God unto you."

00:40:17 And there's one verse where he says, "He is not far from us, and the JST says, "And if we feel after him, He wants to be close." It's like He wants to be found. He's not one of these great gods that you're used to. The unknown God wants to be found and wants to reveal Himself to you. It might not be with Google speed like you're saying.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:40:39 And isn't that interesting, John? You bring up the mystery novels, et cetera. How many people read the first chapter and they can't take it, so they read the last one just to figure out how it's going to end? And the sad part is they miss the whole developing part of the story. We skip it, but that's the generation, or maybe this has been the history of man of all natural men, is we want the fruit, but we don't want to pay the price. Here it comes through, and it says, "Be patient on this one." This will be an odd analogy, but it just popped in my mind, so it's dangerous. But I remember when I was engaged and had fallen in love when we were engaged, we went to an

engagement party with my wife's side of the family. I didn't know these people and this old, I thought he was super old, he was probably younger than I am now.

- 00:41:23 This old guy comes up to me and I felt he was a little confrontive. And he says, "So, you think you're in love?" That's how he started the conversation. I remember saying, "Oh," I'm embarrassed to say this. And I said, "No, no, I don't think I'm in love. I am in love. I know I'm in love." And then he says, "You don't know what love is." And I go, "Yes, I do." And he goes, "No, you really don't. You're too young, you're too inexperienced. You don't really know what that's all about." And I was a little offended by it, and I said to this man, I said, "I have had the chance to drink from the well of love, and I drank from it a lot. I know I'm in love."
- 00:42:04 And he says, "Well, you'll see." Now I was bugged by this guy. And I went to my wife, said, "Who's that guy over there, is he related to you? Seriously." But now we just celebrated our 40th year anniversary. While I didn't like his approach and his method, there's something about that is, "Yeah, I drank from the well of love, but I had no idea how deep that well runs and the breadth of that well." So many of us, we want to be able to have that love for Christ, the love of Christ, which is deep, and it is broad. And no wonder Paul talks about this with the mystery, the mysterious relationship between husband and wife, the relationship of family.
- 00:42:44 We want that and I think that we yearn for it. But here's the sad part we want to skip to the end of the book and find out what the solution is. We want to take a quick sip from the surface waters, but yet it's swimming in those waters and sometimes it's bobbing in those waters and treading in those waters and exploring the waters and drinking deeply to the point where we can't drink more, where all of a sudden, we become tried and true, and things work upon us. It's called conversion. So, yeah, we need to be patient. But then Heavenly Father, in his wonderful wisdom, and I think this is the point again, is not to try our patience necessary because there are times, and I'm sure both of you and many people have felt this is where He gives you an instant answer and you're like going, "What was that?"
- 00:43:28 Here's the funny part, we doubt it, "Is that me speaking, or is that the Spirit speaking? Is it because I want this too much?" And He's like, "You don't know my voice? You're not knowing me?" And if you're really worried if it's right or wrong, corroborate it with what Paul wrote to the Ephesians. The

mysteries will be made known and he, Paul has done it, and it says, "They have been made known," in verse 5, "revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Corroborate your promptings, not necessarily they're going to be... But corroborate your promptings with prophets, seers, and revelators, and they will hold true. So, you see this as a foundation.

00:44:07 And then when it talks about this dispensation, it's very easy in my opinion, in verse 6 that we start to talk about a dispensation of the fullness of times. But notice really in verse 2, it says, "For the dispensation of the grace of God, which has given to me" you word "for you." It's almost like we have to say dispensation of the fullness of times. It's a rule that we say that in one setting. I don't know if that's necessarily true. And Paul, here's just a thought to consider, Paul has split that apart. So, yes, there is a time where it's the fullness of times where all things will be coming together, and this is pretty exciting stuff. You've heard prophets, seers, and revelators saying this will be an amazing time where all things are full.

00:44:50 The fullness of the gospel comes together in that dispensation, that time. But Paul's talking about a different kind of a thought here where he talks about dispensation, not the dispensation of the fullness of time, but a dispensation, and then he starts to talk about fullness of time. It's interesting in the Greek, the dispensation is translated where it's the same root word for what we translate as economy. It starts to talk about the economy of the dispensation of time or other dispensations. It's the economy, and you might translate this in Greek into the administration, administration of, so sometimes we jump in and say, "There will be a time period when we get there. It's going to be sweet and everything's going to be super great, and all our problems will be over," which by the way, seems reminiscent of the saints going to Zion.

Hank Smith: 00:45:40 Yeah, Missouri, we're going to plant a couple of trees and Jesus will probably come. Yeah.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:45:44 And when we get there, we'll love everyone. And could you imagine that ride from Kirtland to Missouri? "Hey, look, there's Zeke Johnson over there in his covered wagon. Where's he going? He must be going to Zion." "That guy is an idiot. He didn't help me with my farm and stuff like that. I can't stand Zeke. I don't know if I want to go to Zion if Zeke's going." But then you expect, when you cross the border into Zion, "Brother, Zeke, come give me a hug, I love you. You are my brother, eternal friend." That some magical transformation happens.

And we know that that's not the case. And so, when we start to look at what's happening with this wonderful conversion, it's becoming more than simply knowing, more than doing.

00:46:24 Although we must learn what we must learn so that we can do what we must do so we can become what we must be. And that's called conversion. And so, here we come down and it's not like, this is what worries me, "Oh, someday we'll be in the dispensation of the fullness of times and everything's going to be great. We don't have to do anything because everything's handed to us, and all is well in Zion. Let's sing Kumbaya or at least Come, Come Ye Saints." But yeah, read, Come, Come Ye Saints, and should we die before our journey's through happy day, all is well with me because I am on the road to conversion, and it'll all come to pass at some point.

00:47:02 This is an interesting element. I like to sometimes just entertain the thought when I'm reading through especially chapter 3 of the great mystery of the dispensation for or of the fullness of times that maybe he's talking about the dispensation and the literal translation word is the economy, the administration that will bring about the fullness of times, and what is that administration? What is that economy? The way that these things will come about? That's chapter 4. And he gave some apostles, and he gave some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers. Why? I'm in chapter 4, and I'm looking down in, that was verse 11, why? Verse 12, oh, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry." And don't forget, "For the edifying of the body of Christ."

00:47:59 Well, how long are we going to be doing that in this dispensation? Well, it's not necessarily the time. It's the economy. It's the way that we're going to be doing that. Verse 13, well, we're going to do that until we, now, Joseph Smith's translation flips this a little bit. He says, "Until we in the unity of faith," we need to develop our unity of faith, "all come to the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man unto the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ." Why? Verse 14. "So," I added that one. That's my foible. "So, that we henceforth will be no more children being tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men, the cunning craftiness, whereby they lie and wait to deceive."

00:48:54 Verse 15. "But speaking the truth in love, that they may grow up into Him." Isn't that interesting wording? "That they may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Jesus Christ from whom the whole body fitly," I like the imagery here, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint

supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase in the body unto the edifying of itself in love." I don't know if you have the same experience, but for me, when I read things like that, boy, I can hear the echoes of Paul writing to the Corinthians where he is talking about gifts of the spirit, parts of the bodies, but we're all one body.

00:49:46 You can hear the echoes of him talking to Bishop Tim, I like to call him Bishop Tim, Timothy, that young bishop and teaching him, and he's saying, "Watch out Timothy, because in the last days," and you all know this, as it says, "perilous times shall come." And then he talks about how perilous and you're thinking, oh, it's going to be horrible hurricanes. It's going to be blood in the streets. And he talks about truce breakers. He talks about lovers of self. And then he says towards the end of that little segment, he says, "and in those last days, they will be ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge," not knowledge. It says, "knowledge of truth."

00:50:28 In these last days, it's like you've already said, and what we've been talking about here, go to the internet. There's not a dearth of stuff out there. And it's not that people aren't smart, boy, we have smart people on this earth, and they are ever learning, but we're not learning the things that are the knowledge, coming to the knowledge of truth. And how do we get help for this one, it's mysterious. How do we figure out truth? I mean, what is truth and how do we apply it? Oh man, this is a mystery. Oh, no, no. It's something that can be known. How do we know it? That's chapter 4. You know it through, verse 11, "He gave some apostles, and He gave some prophets. He gave evangelists" or patriarchs, "and He gave some bishops, and He gave some teachers."

00:51:17 For what purpose? "So, that we will not be blown to and fro with every wind," every possible conception, every new program that's out there that will be founded on the Chief Cornerstone, which by the way, as you know, is usually, at least in ancient times, it was the first part that was laid. It was the first stone because all stones were measured by that, cut by that. It was laying the foundation that would bear the weight, the Cornerstone, which is Jesus Christ. Do not get deviated in this crazy world we live. I remember watching a popular cartoon movie once. There were dogs that had these transmitters that could talk, and all of a sudden, they were saying, "We have this evil squirrel." Oh yeah. What were we talking about?

00:52:05 We get squirreled so often in our world today, it's constant. We get squirreled in our marriages. We get squirreled in the fullness

of knowledge. We get squirreled in treating other people and bringing them into, it's a squirrel. We can't have a conversation, squirrel. We should love one, squirrel. I wonder what I'm going to eat tonight. And yet, what does Paul talk about here is how do we stay on target? Oh, well, here's the anti-squirrel juice prophets, seers, revelators. They will bring us back to this Chief Cornerstone from where we should be measuring, oh, I forgot squirrel. Oh, this is more important.

00:52:42 That's a weird analogy, but that's the world we're living in. And I think that when we say, "Yeah, prophets are good", understatement of the millennia, understatement of the millennia. They are a voice that helps us hear at least in a minimum, a different voice, an alternative, and a calling from days gone by, from a loving Father in heaven saying, "Look, I want you to stay here. Please be close." And we talk a lot about crises of faith today, and they are very real. Where individuals say, "Well, I had a crisis of faith," and I've thought about that and what that means and try to be empathetic or at least sympathetic. And I remember one time reading through, and the word crisis actually from the Latin means decision.

00:53:29 Usually, we think of a crisis, it's over. My hair's on fire and I can't breathe through it. It's the crisis moment. As I'm drowning and I'm going down for the last breath. And I'm not saying that we're describing this incorrectly, but maybe we should step back on the power of the words a crisis is a time of decision. So, don't panic. Don't jump out of the boat. Don't just give up. Don't abandon everything that you've believed in, whether it's your love in a marriage like Paul would be addressing here. Make a decision, don't panic, take some time, get your bearings. What can you do to get some bearings? Maybe you ought to try some prophetic words. Maybe you ought to try prophets, seers, and revelators, you go see a bishop because he holds the power of God.

00:54:13 We call them keys of the priesthood to administer the mysteries, not because he is versed, not because your Relief Society knows all things, but because they've been called by the power of God. And God gave some Relief Society Presidents, and He gave some ministers for families, and He gave some bishops and especially prophets to help us, help us what? Through our crises, through our moments of decision to have faith. You know what this is like? We know it personally or through friends and family to decide, "I'll have faith for one more day. Okay, I'm going to have faith." And that brings me to a thought. I was hired at BYU. My first experience, they had a little seminar for all the new people that were hired.

- 00:55:03 There were about 35 of us, and Elder Eyring came to speak. He was with Elder Perry. They both came and Elder Eyring stood up and he was talking to this small group and oh man, Elder Eyring, he talks fast, like I do when he's not on the pulpit. And he gets excited. It was really fun to see him. I'm like, "Holy cow." And he was just teaching and I'm going, this is the best thing ever. And then all of a sudden, he stops abruptly and sometimes he goes like this, and he crosses his arms. You can't see that very well, but he'll tap his lips and he's thinking, and he stopped talking and he's like for a little bit and he's talking. He goes, "I do not know what faith is." And my first thought was, "This is one of the smartest people I've ever met, and he doesn't know what faith is. I am in serious trouble."
- 00:55:51 And then this is so horrible. My next thought was, "Maybe I should raise my hand and, 'Elder Eyring, Hebrews 11 has some really good things on faith. Alma 32 is good. Try Bible Dictionary. You might enjoy that. It helped me.'" Thank goodness I didn't say a word, but I watched him stand for the longest time after making, "I do not know what faith is," tapping like this. And he was looking up in the back of the room long enough that I almost looked back there to say, "What's going on?" But then he paused and then he said this. He says, "But I do know what faith looks like." And then he paused for a moment, and he said, "Faith looks like those who give their all to God without knowing what all is."
- 00:56:42 Now, I didn't need to write it down, I did. I wrote it in my journal, but that one was imprinted upon my soul. And I have thought about and continue to think about that often. Now think about that in relation to the Ephesians and the great mysteries. Hey, come join our church and have faith in Christ, this is a true concept. And Paul does a great job throughout the Ephesians going through and talking about these great mysteries, but he talks about the reasons why Christ is worth it. It's in every chapter. It's verse after verse or every other verse, et cetera. He can't help himself, "Hey, come and join us. You want to come join us?" What does he do? He invites them to do that experience. And then he says, "Have some faith in this Jesus Christ. It will change you."
- 00:57:27 It will, as John pointed out, and Paul wrote earlier, it'll make you a new creature. You'll become converted to it, and you'll see everything differently. Do you have faith? Sure. And they enter in with enthusiasm like converts do. That's one of the favorite parts about serving a mission is converts, they want to try so hard. It's just so wonderful and so pure, it's like children. And

they come in as far as that goes, and they say, "I'm going to be the best member ever. I will never miss going to church."

Hank Smith: 00:57:56

Yeah, I will read every manual. I will... Yeah.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:57:59

Yes. Oh, it's just a beautiful concept. They have no idea what's coming down the pipe, but yet they entered into it with faith. So, no wonder, for me at least, this resonates so well, is these converts in Ephesus. They have come with a household of faith, and they say, "Okay, here we go." And they're gentiles by the way, and they're working through their marriages, and he says, "Yeah, I'm committed. I'll do everything that Christ tells me. I'll do it through the prophets, seers, and revelators. I'm committed." And they have no idea what's going to come next.

Hank Smith: 00:58:34

I don't know what all is.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:58:36

They don't know what all is. And yet people jump in, missionaries, "Yeah, I'm going to go on a mission. I'm going to be the best missionary. I'll do everything I'm told." And they get out there and they say, "I knew I was going to have a companion, but I didn't know I was going to have this companion. This person's from Mars." They had no idea. But then it comes back and says, "So what are you going to do about it?" And what's the answer? "Have faith. This was part of the plan."

Hank Smith: 00:58:57

I'm going to keep giving all.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:58:58

That's exactly right. We started our mission at the opening of the pandemic. We had COVID, we had the riots in Minneapolis. It was an adventure. So, often our missionaries would say, "President, this is not what I expected. This is not what I signed up for." And I remember thinking as they were talking, I'm going, I never said it, but I'm thinking, "I know what you feel like. Do you think this is what I expected? Do you think I quit my job for this?" You know, kind of a thing. But that's not the point at all. And all of a sudden, I could hear Elder Eyring in my ear coming back and saying, "I don't know what faith is, but I know what it looks like. It looks like those who give their all to God without knowing what all is."

00:59:42

Think about marriage. So, what does this have to do with Ephesians when you start to get to chapter 5. And sadly, for me, this is just my opinion, but sadly we get hung up in chapter 5 and we miss the whole point because of translations and words. So, we start to freak out and I understand where we're coming

from, and we need to be sensitive, and we need to be understanding. We need to be disciples to understand this. But we get hung up on words like submit, wives, submit yourselves. This is wrong. And yeah, that's wording that doesn't fit very well in where we're at in our development and understanding. But also, we probably should be reading Greek, which is helpful to use the words that Paul was probably using, but more importantly is to find the concept. Does it require faith to enter into a marriage?

John Bytheway: 01:00:28

More for my wife than for me, right?

Dr. Matt Richardson: 01:00:32

Even in civil ceremonies, they go through, and they say for better, for worse, for sickness, for health, and things like that. In other words, "I think I know what I'm getting into, and I commit to be this type of person." Isn't it interesting, in a temple sealing, you kneel humbly at an altar with a spouse. And the wording there just briefly is you don't take this person to be your lawfully wedded wife or a lawfully wedded husband, that's the traditional element. In the temple, you say, "Do you receive this person to be your spouse?" There is a voluntary giving and there is a receiving and you do it on bended knee where you're humble and all of a sudden that person, that woman or that man becomes actually your greatest gift or should be your greatest gift.

01:01:25

You're receiving them, it's a gift and you cannot take them, and you cannot wield power against them. If you want to go down that path, read Doctrine and Covenants section 121 and section 122 that this is not yours to wield. And all of a sudden you start to get back into this great mystery, "Well, how's this supposed to work?" It's on humility and just like priesthood power, we receive it for the benefit of others. You can't give yourself a priesthood blessing. You can't call yourself to a calling, it's a gift for you. And we learned that in D&C section 84, for the benefit of others. All of a sudden God's vision starts to change us. In Ephesians, it comes in and starts to talk about what Paul will call in verse 32, he says this referring to the preceding verses in chapter 5, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

01:02:30

Reverence is once again in our vernacular and our worry about this is this like, "Oh, see, I'm putting myself below my husband." No, read all of your scriptures. What do we do with God? We love him with our heart, might, mind, and strength. We revere him. We have reverence, which is not just quietness. And some

people say, "See, wives are supposed to be quiet." That's not what this is saying, to revere is to love with almost a deity-esque experience where it's, I'll call it charity, it's God-like love. And so, here's what we're saying is we're in this together and we are each other's great gift. And that's what Paul is talking about. So, ought men love their wives that they never become better.

01:03:14 Their pleasure, their flesh never becomes greater than the need of their gift, their spouse, Paul was probably right there on the sidelines when D&C section 132 was revealed, talking about how this is going to work when you enter into a covenant husband and wife and with God this wonderful triad experience, you're not going to be saved without that spouse. So, you better start working on having faith in God who's asking you to do something that's more than you thought it was, all, you need to give your all not knowing what all is. And then all of a sudden in that marriage, you have children, and that changes the dynamic.

01:03:52 And then you work through, "Oh, I'll be the best dad ever. I'm going to be the best mom on the planet when my children get older, they'll want to double date with us because we're so fun," or whatever and stuff. And we have these imaginations of what it's going to be like. And then you forget about the sleepless nights and then the worry, even when they are grown, and they are married, and the concept of Godliness continues. It's really a beautiful thing. And sadly, sometimes what happens is this wonderful section in five which he calls a mystery, is really coming down and saying, well look at chapter 5 verse 8, "For you are sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord." Then I love his admonition. "Walk then, as children of the light." Stop embracing doubt. Stop walking in the darkness. Ye have the light, have faith. You're going to be okay. Watch prophets, seers, and revelators. Paul calls this a great mystery, but it's a mystery that's known.

John Bytheway: 01:04:51 That's what faith looks like. Walk as children of light.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 01:04:54 Well said, John. Well, what does Jesus say earlier? How do you know people? How do you know the children of God? How do you know if they're children? By their fruits, you shall know them. "Oh, well, I have to be perfect all the time." No, you don't. No, you need to be the children of light. And what do children of light do? They do their best to stay in the light. I look at covenants and covenants have so much to do with this. And in the Hebrew, you look at one of the forms of covenants when they talk about covenants comes from beriyth, and it's the same

word for to fetter. So, a covenant fetters, that's the same word that we use as hobbling. Are you familiar with hobbling horses? If you hobble a horse, you tie the back leg with the front leg so they can still move around and graze and get around, but they can't run and sprint off.

John Bytheway: 01:05:38

They can't gallop.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 01:05:39

It keeps them close. Think about that in a way with covenants. What do covenants do? It's not that they restrict us, and they hold us back, but what they do is they hobble us. They fetter us in a way so that we still have our freedom, we can wander, we can go into places we want to graze and stuff, but hopefully what a covenant does is it keeps you close enough that you're never too far from the arm of the Lord. A covenant will keep you close when family and loved ones wander, hopefully, if they are covenant and we keep our covenants and we exercise faith and we heed to the economy of where our fullness will come, meaning prophets, seers, and revelators so that we know how to get through these mysterious difficult times with family members that are departing, spouses.

01:06:30

We all have a whole different set of cards that have been dealt to us, but it's how we play our hand that becomes different. And the covenant, we should never, in my opinion, never weary in having faith in the covenant because it's, if I understand it correctly, it's keeping us close enough that we can always be redeemed. What is our role? Keep those that you love that are under covenants close to you as well. Don't sell the farm, don't give up. Well, how do I do that? I've tried everything. Oh, well, how about prophets, seers, and revelators? Have they spoken about this?

John Bytheway: 01:07:06

I have Joseph Fielding McConkie echoing in my mind when I was reading Ephesians and he just said, once, "We read scriptures too fast." And I really had to slow down to read Ephesians, but what you're talking about in marriage here, when I read 25 and I slow down, "Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." That's beautiful and there's so much meaning in there. What you were talking about reverence. I thought, "Boy, that's such a good point because what do we say in primary be reverent and what do we mean?"

Hank Smith: 01:07:50

Fold your arms, don't talk.

John Bytheway: 01:07:51

When you do the first two syllables, revere, I was like, "Oh, that's good. I cherish my wife. I revere my wife. I hope we have that for each other." And if we slow down a little bit and as you

said, take all of these scriptures and put them together when we're talking about what this means about submitting and so forth, and you'll see this much bigger more beautiful picture. So, thank you for that.

- Hank Smith: 01:08:21 Yeah, I was reading some of the other translations of Ephesians 4, and I noticed this in the New Living Translation. And then a couple of other translations of Ephesians 4:11, listen to the new living translation. "Now, these are the gifts Christ gave to the church, the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and the teachers." And there's some other translations that refer to this as not just he gave some, he gave them as a gift. And it reminded me of Mosiah 8. Ammon, not the missionary Ammon, but the first Ammon is teaching the people of Limhi about prophets, seers, and revelators. He's talking about King Mosiah and the king in here are going back and forth. And then this is what Ammon says. He says, "By a prophet, God has provided a means that man through faith might work mighty miracles. Therefore he," I think he means the prophet the seer, the revelator, "become a great benefit to his fellow beings."
- 01:09:23 And as I was thinking about President Nelson when he turned 99, I was thinking about him, what a gift he is, and what a great benefit he has been. Just one paragraph from a talk six months ago called Peacemakers Needed, President Nelson, "My dear brothers and sisters, how we treat each other really matters. How we speak to and about others at home, at church, at work, and online really matters. Today I am asking us to interact with others in a higher, holier way. Please listen carefully. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy that we can say about another person, whether to his face or behind her back, that should be our standard of communication." That's just one paragraph of how many talks has President Nelson given us in the last six years and then even previous to that as an apostle, he has been a gift, a great benefit.
- John Bytheway: 01:10:22 Little phrases like hear him and let God prevail. Oh man, I find myself going back to those with my, "Come on. Back up. Let's learn to hear Him and let's let God prevail." And what a gift.
- Dr. Matt Richardson: 01:10:38 What I'm feeling listening to you speak is you're speaking really Ephesian. You're in a situation of saying, "This is what Paul is saying," or Pauline is in a circumstance, listen to this situation of what's taking place is I'm going to tell you the great mysteries where people are stumbling and falling, and I'm going to tell you them through the economy, the dispensation, the economy that will bring about the fullness of times. And that's going to be prophets, seers, and revelators. A long time ago I had the

opportunity to serve on a committee where we were doing media at BYU, and I'd go up and the director of this committee meeting was President Nelson.

01:11:16 So, we would meet and we would go through the different things for BYU Broadcasting, et cetera. And I learned an interesting lesson through that, one is President Nelson is so sharp, he doesn't miss a beat. He could catch a typo on footnote three on page seven, just like that. And he's always so kind, but he was always accurate. The only reason I bring that up is he is a man of great detail. My interpretation of this one, when he uses words, I don't think he minces words. I think he uses words on purpose and he's very precise. So, when you have a prophet, seer, and revelator that's talking like, Hank, when you were reading those things, my goodness, we should pay attention to those words. John, what you said may be beneficial.

01:11:59 Read more slowly and contemplate why the choice of those words. And when you look at chapter 3 in Ephesians, and they're talking about the great mystery of Gentiles coming into the church, which by the way is delivered by a voice who struggled with that concept before his conversion, meaning Saul. Sometimes we forget about this. Is this eating crow, so to speak, or not for Paul? He's doing everything to have his voice, right? But it's interesting when you go back and saying, "Oh yeah, this was a pretty big concept for Saul." And now he is forging ahead and often refers to himself as the apostle among the Gentiles.

Hank Smith: 01:12:38 He truly has become a new creature.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 01:12:40 Well said. And does that have merit at least to think about? Yes. Yes. I think it does. As he's embracing this, he's talking to other fellow converts who are, John, as you pointed out in the very beginning, in an environment where people are suspicious of converts, they're angry at converts, really, they're bigots. All of these things are in play. And one of the great mysteries is, here we go, come on, and he calls them aliens. In verse 12, he says, "They without Christ being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise." But then next thing you know, all of a sudden, he's saying, "Hey, look, when it comes down to it, you are no more foreigners and you are no more strangers, but you're one unified in the household of faith and of God."

01:13:28 So, how is that going to happen? Because even within the household of God, we do have prejudice and we do have personal bias and we are still wrestling. And so, Hank, what

you're bringing up is right, so maybe we should do a Paul taught the Ephesians is, "Okay, so what do we do? It's a mystery. How do we join together with such diversity? And what do we do with immigrants? And what do we do with..." You name it. You name it. The diverse world that we live in and building upon what you said, Hank, my dear brothers, and sisters, this is President Nelson, how we treat each other really matters. Now, that's not a grandpa just saying, "Hey, I've learned it all my years we should be nice to each other." That's a prophet of God. That sounds a little mysterious. You're talking magic now. Yeah, we are. We're talking miracles.

01:14:16 And then he is going, "I'm asking us to interact with others in a higher, holier way. The gospel net," he goes on, "is the largest net in the world. God has invited all unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female. There is room for everyone. However, there is no room for prejudice, condemnation, or contention of any kind." That's the April conference 2023. Now, does that sound like Paul writing to the Ephesians of the great mystery of not just how did the Gentiles get accepted into the household of faith? That was one of the great mysteries. By the way, the only way that came about was revelation.

01:15:00 It came through revelation, and you started to see Peter working on that. And it was hard, but it was also hard for all the saints to be able to say, "Time to shift because our mysteries, our secrets are revealed. Now, what do we do about it?" Same old, same old. No, no. There is no room for prejudice. They are our brothers and sisters. We must, here we go, change and we must become new creatures when it comes to prejudice and bias. And we must become like Christ who just revealed through his prophets, seers, and revelators that we accept all of his children because that is what He has done. Here we have a prophet of God just in April and almost giving a sermon on the great mysteries of having the household of faith where we no longer have foreigners, and we don't have strangers.

01:15:54 The Ephesians, what was happening is we should like this book because it's our book in a way. It's principally going on and you just go through President Nelson alone and just his conference talks or his major addresses that are published, and you look at the concepts of what he's doing. And John, you pointed out he's teaching some powerful principles that are easy to remember, not that easy to do unless we heed prophets, seers, and revelators.

John Bytheway: 01:16:21 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:01	Welcome to part two with Dr. Matt Richardson, the Book of Ephesians.
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:00:07	I remember talking with a missionary once. We were talking about, "Are we doing any good?" Sometimes they listen to our message and I said, "Yes, you're doing great." Could you imagine if people just adhered to simple principles we taught. Not the restored truths, but what would happen to this world? What would it look like if everyone kept the word of wisdom? Just the basic principles of the word of wisdom. Would it change the world? How many marriages would be saved? How many cases of abuse would be eliminated because we just get rid of the chemical addictions? It would be a different world just based on that.
	00:00:38	We all know that the word of wisdom is not simply a physical health code. Yes, it has a temporal aspect. Because it must because the soul is the body and the Spirit. They impact each other. But we do good when we teach these little principles of how different would the world be if husbands truly loved their wives.
	00:00:57	I'm not even talking about having the benefit of the covenant yet. It would never do anything that would harm them because they get into a we mentality than a me mentality. Because if I hurt her or she hurts him, then we're hurting us. It's every time we damage us. But what do prophets, seers, and revelators say if we had any counsel on marriage and family? Oh, just President Nelson alone, "Your highest personal priority is your spouse, husband to wife and wife to husband. Your commitment to each other is eternal. Your families, children and grandchildren are yours forever. Through appropriate means, keep them as close as you can, even though distances between you may be great, let them feel of the feeling as you serve the Lord in his work." Isn't that interesting? Let them feel the feeling as you serve the Lord in his work your capacity to love is like Christ.

	00:02:00	<p>That's a prophet, seer, and revelator. That was in a seminar in June of 2017, so it was a little while back, but that right there for me is chapter 5 in Ephesians from a living prophet, seer, and revelator. Oh, what do you mean by serve? So am I a servant there? And don't get caught up in that part. Look at the general principle of faith that's being taught here, and we cannot refute that important principle. And you can do that in every aspect in Ephesians. It has not been lost on modern prophets, seers, revelators. How many bishops are talking about this in their fifth Sunday experiences? Why? So that we may come to a unity of faith so that there is one body, this is chapter four, verse 3, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.</p>
	00:02:44	<p>That's verse 3, in one body, one spirit, even as you're called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and father of all who is above all and through all. And I love this line. And in you all. How does that come? What does Paul say? It's grace. He does such a good job with grace here, but what is he telling us? You can't do it on your own. You can qualify, but you never merit his grace. But we need to rely on him. And sadly what's happening is we're abandoning the very essence. We're abandoning God, Christ, the ability to even exercise faith in temporal things, let alone spiritual things, prophets, seers, and revelators, oh, they're just nice old men. They don't know what it's like to live. We're abandoning the very thing that will provide us the answers to our great mysteries.</p>
John Bytheway:	00:03:39	<p>You mentioned something, it makes me want to go back because as I knew we were going to be talking about this, I went to Ephesians 2, 8 and 9 and I've had members of other faiths quote these to me as if they were problematic. And the more I've learned and the more helpful discussions have gone on about this and about 2 Nephi 25 about after all we can do, there's nothing that I see in there that's problematic. Do you know what I mean? Do you feel like we have grown to understand Ephesians 2:8 and 9, "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast." I think some of our critics say that we... And maybe some of us feel this way. We are trying to earn our salvation.</p>
	00:04:29	<p>Now, I read these verses and I don't see anything problematic in that. This reminds me of King Benjamin saying, "Are we not all beggars?" We're in the position of someone that is begging for our salvation. We're not earning it.</p>

Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:04:44	Do we understand that better? I think we talk about it better, and I think that our understanding is more illuminating now as Latter-day Saints. We're in a position where we're being more thoughtful, in my opinion. Does that mean we understand it? I still wonder about that one and I think that's manifest in our daily attitudes where sometimes we can't even forgive ourselves. Yet we've gone through and we believe in the Atonement and it's because I made a mistake.
	00:05:08	Well, let God do his great goodness. Let his power his grace work upon you. I don't see it as a contradiction. I'm with you, John. I don't see that as a contradiction. As a matter of fact, one of my favorite writers is Brother Lewis. Brother CS Lewis.
John Bytheway:	00:05:21	Yes.
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:05:22	I say brother because I think he's joined in the Spirit world. I think he's-
John Bytheway:	00:05:25	I think I know where you're going with this.
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:05:27	But he talked about this great dichotomy or what people would set up as an opposition where he would say faith and works. And he compared it to scissors. And he says, "This is asking which blade does the work in scissors? And the answer is you need both blades to cut." I look at it as like a coin, and this is going back to embarrassing times. It was when I was playing little league football and I was the captain. I was just little. And the referee brings out the coin for the coin toss and he says heads or tails? He flips the coin of the air and I said, "Both." And he's like, "What?" I go, "Both, both." He goes, "You can't call heads and tails," and I go, "I just want the quarter."
	00:06:10	And yet we take that position in our lives as we don't see the value in the coin. We emphasize either heads and we always say this, it's not heads and tails, it's heads or tails. Justice or mercy. The value is when you combine heads and tails, works and grace. The verse that you read, this kind of is a subtle way to look at it. Verse 8, "For by grace, ye are saved through faith." I believe that true 100% and I believe that grace is beyond my comprehension and how he administers that is beyond me. That's why I want to be like him.
	00:06:50	But then the verse goes on and it says, "And that not of yourselves," Joseph Smith translation, "but it is the gift of God." Grace is. Not by yourself, but grace is the gift of God. But then you got to keep on reading. "Not of works lest any man should

boast." Boast what? Well, this is where the Book of Mormon comes. Don't boast of yourself for when you become learned, ye think ye are wise. Yes, we need to keep our humility to God. But then Paul goes on in verse 10, "For we are his workmanship created in Jesus Christ under good works, which God hath before ordained."

00:07:31 There's that preordained experience again. But here's the second side of the coin. Even Paul is using that one that we should walk in them. You still have to walk. Yes, it's a gift. You need to open the gift. You need to try on the new shoes. You need to take the gift and use it. So yes, we must do all that we can do. Now here's the fine line for me. So in my desire to be better, I pray like you cannot believe that God will help me to be strong, to overcome temptation, to be the type of husband and father that I need to be, to be the type of fellow citizen that I should to others.

00:08:07 I pray for that strength. And then when I do all that I can do, is that Matt Richardson doing it all or is that Matt Richardson's effort combined with God answering my prayer? Well, let's look at it this way. Sometimes I think we take a little license with this one and maybe we don't quote it quite right. He talks about opposition and we say there's opposition in all things. Actually read the verse carefully. It says, "There is an," A-N, "an opposition in all things."

00:08:35 So I don't think God's up there saying, "I'm going to give you opposition to everything. Just wait for me to show up and here comes the hard part." I think he's constantly teaching us and gives us opportunity to understand there will always be an opposite in everything. There's an opposite of bad. So, when things are going horribly wrong, know deep down there is an opposition, an opposite, and it's called things going well.

00:08:56 Now, the question is how do I get out of this and how do I reverse the titles? Things are going great. Please know that there's an opposition and opposite to that. So, stay the course and stay the path. It gives us hope. Hope in what? It's the Book of Ephesians that when we're at the end of our rope that there are things that can be done and God will reveal his secret. And he will redeem you. He will always redeem you by his good grace, his grace.

00:09:25 But that's not predetermined, but it's asking us to become like him. We do our best to act like him and he gives us the power to do so. Yes, he is in everything. God is in everything. Even our good works. When we are at our best, we have to praise God.

Why? Well, Paul says, "Because I don't want you to boast of yourself."

Hank Smith: 00:09:46

You did this somehow.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:09:48

Yeah. Come with me and I'll show you something as we used to tell our missionaries because it's true. We told our children this as well. But we said one of the great secrets to missionary work in disciple's life is when you understand this is not about you and Ephesians is the same. This isn't about you. This is about our gentile converts. This isn't about you, this is about your spouse. This isn't about you, this is about being humble enough to receive counsel from God through prophet, seers, revelators, patriarchs, teachers, bishops, et cetera. It's not about you. We tell our missionaries, "As soon as you can get it through your head that this is not about you." "Yeah, but I am tired." "This isn't about you."

00:10:32

But here's the great secret and Christ taught it in this way is if you labor and lose your life, then what happens? You find it or you find a life that is beyond what you ever imagined you become, here we go again, a convert, a new creature in Christ. So, here's the weird part, as soon as we start to learn, it's not about me, and this is what prophets are always teaching us. Here's this. It's not about you. All of a sudden you realize this is all about me.

00:10:59

He is saving me. He is making me more. He is interested in my happiness and my eternal joys. He is interested in me doing my part for others to find their lives. It's that great paradox. How can this come together? It's two sides of the coin. It's not about you, it's all about you. And we will be saved by his good grace. So that's a long-winded way to say, John, I'm with you.

Hank Smith: 00:11:27

Matt, earlier you talked about we are rejecting the very thing that can save us. And it reminded me of when we discussed these people, the Ephesians back in Acts and how Paul comes into town and some people are being converted. And then there was Demetrius, the silversmith who did not like Paul. He says to his friends, "This is our craft. We build these idols and you can see we have our wealth." And Paul is persuading and turning away many people. And then he says, "We know that Diana is the best and we don't want her despised." But really this is really bad for business. What Paul is teaching is really bad for business.

00:12:10

I wonder if that's one of the reasons we sometimes become Demetrius in that we reject these teachings from prophets and

apostles because it's very uncomfortable and it's going to alter the way I live. It's going to cause me to have to change. And it's bad for business maybe like Demetrius.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:12:30

I think you're absolutely right and I don't think we might be like that. I think we are all like that depending on what prophets, seers, and revelators say. We're okay with a certain degree of being uncomfortable, but don't threaten my very essence. And for most of us, pick your poison. It's the reasons we reject prophet, seers, and revelators are usually something when it hits a little close to the nerve. And when you start to look at what's happening with the silver trade as far as that goes, that was getting close to the nerve of their livelihood. It wasn't like, "Oh, it's good for you but it's not good for me, whatever."

00:13:02

It's like you are now threatening me and who I am. Prophets, seers, and revelators voices are challenging because they go contrary to the natural tendencies of all of us because we are natural men. So, you go back to King Benjamin's address is natural men and women, natural mankind will be an enemy to God and always will be the case unless something happens. And you all know how that works is we put off the natural man. We have to put it off and we must yield to the enticing of the Spirit.

00:13:36

Now, with that in mind, this is Ephesians because if you look at conceptually what's taking place, we're saying that the mysteries will be revealed. It'll be done through prophets, seers, and revelators. Most of all the verses you'll see this thing going back and forth and it's almost like he's reading lists. But conceptually, here's the thought is it looks like those lists are saying, avoid the things that cause you to be distanced from the Spirit and do the things that cause you to be closer to the Spirit.

00:14:06

Because revelation is spirit born. Isaiah taught that God's ways are not man's ways and therefore we usually cast them off. We trod upon them. We think that they're weird because his ways are higher than our ways. And when prophets speak, if they're truly prophets and they're speaking God's will in his design, yes, we are the silversmiths of the modern age and it threatens who I am. We take our identity by the things that we do in our living. "I am a fill in the blank."

00:14:36

I'm a butcher, I'm a baker, I'm a candlestick maker. That's who I am actually. I think that's what we do. What we do. Who we are is not our craft, it's our integrity. When prophets start to speak about something that might change my candlestick making business or my silver trade, you are now talking about me personally. It's personal. And that's where we are not going to

become any type of a new creature, but we love our natural man. The only way we're going to be able to do this is put it off. Prophet, seers and revelators help us with that. And we yield.

00:15:15 Everyone must learn to yield. Now, I'm glad you brought this one up, Hank, because actually in Paul's visit, because the letter was written in his first imprisonment, at least that's what most historians think. So, he's in prison and he's reflecting upon his experience with the Ephesians. So, what we read in the Book of Acts and what you just talked about was very dicey, but now later he's writing to him and saying, "Way to go, guys. You're hanging in there." Some to the point of callings and elections. You've made the choice and you didn't let the world define you.

00:15:48 So how does that compare to Christ's great intercessory experience where here he knows he's going to death and then resurrection. And he tells the apostles, "I'm not taking you guys with me. I'm leaving you here. You need to be here. You must be in the world." But then comes the caveat, but not defined by it. You must be in that great sermon on the mount. You need to stay here and be the light. You need to light the world, not in the world's light, but your light. My light. You need to be the salt. You must give flavoring.

00:16:24 What salt is supposed to do is it brings out natural flavoring. If it's administered appropriately, it brings out natural the goodness of natural flavoring of foods not necessarily changes the taste of food, it brings out the goodness of foods. So, if we are supposed to be those who bring out the best flavoring of mankind in the world we live, even the Ephesians in that crazy Greek Roman experience, we can't be defined by the world. We must not be of the world.

00:16:54 You're right, this is a hard thing. And yet somehow this saint is like, "I guess I'll pat them on the back as at least a lot of them are hanging in there." And they did not succumb to the pressure of the craftsmen. And then my heart just feels sad for where I'm defined as being a silversmith. That's who I am, not what I do. And I think these are good counsel or points for us all to go through and say, "So what does this have to do with me? Am I defined by what I have. If I lose this, will I not be me?" That's one of the things that our missionaries, they were so worried about losing themselves. "But I won't be Jeff anymore. I'm just going to be Elder Smith," or something like that.

00:17:35 You go, "Is that a bad thing?" And we fight back upon it. And when you read a standard, it's like, "I don't want to do that anymore. What do you mean I can't listen to country western

music? Heavenly Father, he listens to country western music," whatever. Well, he doesn't right now because this is part of a unique thing is learn to become something new. I think that most of it is practicing to become new creatures and allowing ourselves to exercise faith and give our all to him without knowing every detail.

Hank Smith: 00:18:03 Yeah. Demetrius seems to, instead of yielding, it's like, "Let me get other people upset. Let me get a big group of people upset." And John, this is the point, if you remember, some cried one thing, some cried another.

John Bytheway: 00:18:16 Oh, I love it. And some didn't even know why they were there. And I thought, "Oh, that's our world. Hey, there's a protest, let's go. What are we protesting? I don't know. Hold this sign. And let's just be mad." So, I keep thinking back to your beautiful quotation of President Nelson about peacemakers. He said, "Even online people just, behind a screen they can be so mad and sometimes malicious to each other." And I thought, "That's a good point even online to be a peacemaker."

Hank Smith: 00:18:43 I can yield or I can gather up a bunch of other angry people and we can attack.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:18:50 Go back to what you said about one of the early statements of our prophet, John. You said, "Let God prevail." Isn't that what we're talking about right here? We don't let God prevail in our lives. We don't yield. As soon as something goes through, it's kind of like if you hit the nerve, it causes pain, immediately we react. Typically, we do not pause and say, "Ooh, that's interesting." It's kind of like even in parenting, you have a child that comes, "You're a bad dad." "No, I'm not a bad dad." They're five years old. "I'm not a bad dad. As a matter of fact, I have three PowerPoint presentations of why I'm a good dad. Let me show you why I'm a good dad."

00:19:25 And sometimes it behooves us, or as Paul uses even the Ephesian, he uses the word beseech. That's a visceral invitation. I beseech you, I'm begging, I'm pleading. I'm on my knees. It beseeches us to contemplate and say, "Why would my five-year-old say I'm a bad dad?" And get over my pride and the nerve of hurt and say maybe there's something that he's saying that I need to do better. I should be better. And when it comes to prophets, seers, and revelators, it's amazing. I remember when President Nelson gave the talk, I think it was to single adults and he talks about labeling. I thought it was such a masterful talk. And then I remember looking for a quote and it took me to... Must've been Deseret News or something like

that. You know where people can comment after the article on don't label. Man, talk about vitriol and hatred.

00:20:15 It just was one after another where I'm going and he's like, "He's labeling everybody." No, he was actually asking us not to label, but yet our disposition, our natural man, there was no yielding of contemplation "Maybe there's something here that could be beneficial". And that's the world we live in. It's a hotbed mess. Why? We're not willing to put things off and we are definitely... In general terms, I still am very hopeful. We're definitely not into yielding. Hardly any of us are into yielding. By the way, what's one of the biggest challenges in marriage relationships? Yielding, putting off our old kind of thing. What's the biggest challenge with our coming with new friendships, yielding with new cultures, yielding.

00:21:01 We don't sell the farm. We don't give up the doctrinal foundation of base, but it's this concept. It's a disposition, it's an attitude. So, you can see that this is what Ephesians is about. It's natural men and women.

John Bytheway: 00:21:13 I just keep thinking how different it is living in a... Can I say this, a center stake of Zion or just living in a well established stake and how different it must have been for them when you've got Jewish longtime members that are now converts and then you've got gentile converts. And that's Paul's backdrop with all of these. Wow. That's got to be tougher than anything I think I've experienced in my ward or stake to have those kind of backgrounds. And maybe other wards and stakes may be different, but I think, "Wow, what he's dealing with here, this is tough."

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:21:50 And isn't that interesting? But yet principally, whether it's on the Wasatch front or whether it's in an emerging area of the church, principally speaking, we're all wrestling with the same thing, is putting off our natural tendencies and being able to yield to the enticing of the Spirit. So how do we do that? Read the Book of Ephesians or other of these great books is it says, here's how you come closer to the Spirit. That's where when I was thinking about our podcast today, I'm like going, so should I go through line by line. After a while, like I said, it's kind of like reading through these lists. Here's some good things you can do to do what? Get close to the Spirit.

00:22:25 And here's some things you should not be doing. And he lists those, why? They take you away from the Spirit. But here's the real question, in my opinion, not what we should and shouldn't do, although those are very critical. It comes down and says,

"Why is that important?" And the theme of this one is the Spiritual things can only be known through spirit. Therefore, revelation is a spiritual manifestation and it can only be known through the Holy Ghost, through the Spirit.

00:22:52 You must have the Spirit to be sacramental prayers always to be with you. So, here's things to get the Spirit with you. Why? So you can receive revelation. Why is that important? So that you can receive the prophet, seers and revelators revelation. And sometimes what happens is we don't. What Paul, I believe is doing in Ephesians, he's saying, Look, life is mysterious and it's hard. I know some of you're throwing your hands in the air. You're getting pressures from the outside. We can't, so you've been trying super hard and things are rough. Don't you dare give up because it's mysterious. It's a secret that God will tell you.

00:23:29 How is he going to tell you? Through revelation, both personal revelation and prophetic utterance. And those two, by the way, they should align. Are wards struggling with this? Yes. And then you have a prophet today doing the same thing. So, he stands up and he says, this is October conference of 2021, "The voices and pressures of the world are engaging and numerous. But too many voices are deceptive, seductive, and can pull us off the covenant path." This is pretty interesting stuff. So then what does he say?

00:24:02 "To avoid the inevitable heartbreak that follows. I plead with you today to counter the lure of the world by making time for the Lord in your life." Isn't that a simple thing? Just make time for the Lord in your life each and every day. That was October conference of 2021. So, it's almost like you can hear Paul or you can hear President Nelson when you're reading Ephesians, that's what he's saying. Put off the world, yield.

00:24:31 Here's where you read through all this stuff, and if you get the theme going on here, and you're like going, "Hey look, you need to be converted individuals and you're on the path, you've joined the church and we're everywhere in between new converts to those who are doing super well in their faith and their conversion process." It's deep in their hearts and everything in between.

00:24:53 And then Paul does this really great thing, and I think it's fitting here because it's the Ephesians and it's because of their port city, and it's because their interaction with Rome and all the things that they would know well as all of a sudden when you get towards the end here and you start to get into chapter 6, he

starts to bring up this really interesting little concept and he says, Don't just rely on grace. You're going to have to suit up here. This is going to be a fight. If you think that this is going to be something you'll lie around and all of a sudden you receive salvation because it just came in a FedEx package kind of thing. You've got to rethink this one.

00:25:29 And all of a sudden he starts to frame this in a great wrestle. And in my opinion, our conversation actually framed chapter 6 super well because we have been talking in my opinion this whole time of the wrestle between worldliness and godliness. Natural man and new creature of Christ. And he says, "Children obey your parents and the Lord for this is right." I think that's a fascinating wording right there. Why should I do that? So, you can get a car because your parents will give you a chariot when you're 16, Ephesians. This is why you should obey your parents.

00:26:05 No, he says because it's the right thing to do. Why is it right? Read chapter 5. It's the way that we treat people. It's the way we treat our loved ones. And then he goes, "Honor thy father and thy mother," which is the first commandment, "with promise so that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth." Your legacy will live long on the earth. Your image, your quality, your character, your helping will live long on the earth. This is fascinating words that are coming down here. I remember hearing prophet, seers, and revelators.

00:26:35 James E. Faust used to talk about this a lot is, "The best way to honor your parents is to live an honorable life." It's not simply about doing everything they say, but do what is right. Honor your heavenly parents and it will bring ultimately honor to your parents. My father is a convert to the church. I get a little emotional thinking about this situation. When he finally decided to join after 23 sets of missionaries, when he finally came and received his own personal testimony to start his conversion, his family essentially said, "You have a choice to make."

00:27:08 Back in those days, you can be a Mormon is what they said, or you can be a Richardson but you can't be both. He joined the church and then I didn't know this. I was little at the time, but we went to every family reunion when we were not invited. I just thought everybody from where he was from were just mean and ornery people. I didn't realize it was because my dad joined the church.

John Bytheway: 00:27:31 Wow.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:27:32 But yet he was a disciple of Christ and he said, I cannot abandon the great gifts that I have and therefore I must be a good son. And in my dad's mind, I admire this deeply about it. Looking back on it, it was a moment of courage for him, I'm sure. But when it came down to it, he says, "I will honor my mother and my father. Not by doing what they told me to do or avoiding the church and stuff, by being honorable in my own conversion and coming to Christ and making sure that I do my best to be part of their world." But even if it's a situation of showing up when it was uncomfortable.

00:28:04 Honor thy father and mother, which is the first great commandment with promise and thy days shall be long. And we still continue to do our best to bring honor through an honorable life by honoring God the Father, our heavenly parents. So then don't provoke your children in verse 4. Verse 5, "Servants be obedient to them that are your masters." It starts to talk about this interesting element and it's going to be a fight and it's going to be what we've been talking about wrestle. So, you go to verse 12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places.

00:28:43 Now, is that not describing what we are wrestling with today? The intensity might be varied and the way that it's manifest might be a little divergent, but it seems that we're doing this. I mean we're living in such a hostile world that feels like that we can't be friends hardly no matter what, unless you're exactly like me. But you look at that as we're wrestling against principalities, powers, rulers, darkness and wickedness in high places and in low places.

00:29:16 So what do you do about this? And I love the way Paul does this is he's talking about all this stuff as, "Well, okay, you're going to have to be in the world folks, but don't go unprotected." So, you go to the next verse and there it starts with verse 13, "Wherefore," or in other words, by definition the word, wherefore. "Because of this, because of what we've been talking about..." I don't know if it means just chapter 6 or if it means everything that we have talked about in my letter so far because I don't think he probably delineated his letter as chapter 1 or paragraph 1 or it was a continuous whole, "Wherefore because of all these things that we've been talking about, take unto you the whole Armor of God."

00:30:00 Why? "So that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all and I believe with the grace of God to stand.

Now, I don't think that it was an accident that the wording of this is manifest as it is. So, it says take on the whole Armor of God. Why? So that you'll do two things: One, withstand in the evil day and two, it comes down and it says having done all to stand. So, if you look at that, is that just a matter of semantics? Well, if you read this in the Greek, it gives you two different types of connotations here that I think is at least worthy to mention.

00:30:47 We take on the Armor of God and we're not done, but we're doing it for purpose. So, when you start to look at withstand in the text that comes from the Greek, anthistemi, which means by definition we translate as withstand to stand opposite of, or to stand against something to oppose and to resist actively.

00:31:12 This is almost like a pushback experience. And there are times where we put on the Armor of God so that we will be able to push back. We're going into the fight, into the fray. We're not just hunkering down. There'll be times. This reminds me of Moroni, Captain Moroni. He's so frustrated with verse 12. What he's wrestling with Amalickiah and all of that that's going on, right? And what does he do? He goes through and he expresses his frustration and things he wants to stand for. Then the next thing he does is he goes and he puts on his armor, kneels in his own apartment or wherever he lives, lodge, and he enters into a covenant.

00:31:52 And then he goes out to fight the fight. So he is withstanding the pressures of his world. He asks, "Is there anybody else who will come with me?" And they run and get their armor on and come out and they kneel in the streets and they enter into a covenant. The rest is this great massive mobility of an active withstanding. Does that make sense? In the evil day and what it says in verse 12. But then it says having done all, having done perhaps this withstanding, it says, "In the end result, there are times you'll be able to stand." It says in verse 11, "Stand against the wiles of the devil and having done all, you'll be able to stand," in verse 13.

00:32:31 So there's a standing part here which is histemi. Not anthistemi, but histemi. Histemi is to abide, to continue to establish or to hold up. And it kind of connotes an upright position that you're not moving. I envision it like king of the hill, we used to play when we were little kids. You try to knock somebody off of the mountain. And what you do is you gird up for it and somebody comes to push you off of it and you lean into it, but you don't move. You will not move.

	00:33:03	So no wonder when Paul talks about stand ye in holy places and be not moved, he's talking about histemi. He is talking about, "Hunker down, do not be moved and people are going to try to knock you off. Hold the line, be brave, but wear the Armor of God so that you can stand." Now here's the kicker, "And there are times you're going to have to fight back. We must do both." Sometimes we get too comfortable with just hunkering down and weathering the storm when we also need to advance and actively fight against.
	00:33:41	And not everything is always going to be an active fight against. And I think everyone who is listening and all of us, we have been in circumstances where we know that we must have the Armor of God on to be able to be in the world we're at. And there's a time where it's best not to fight the fight with your friends, but to withstand and hold your own for the time that comes when you can actively pursue. I think it's no accident that when you put the Armor of God, and we'll go through that in just a minute, is so much of it is withstanding material, help you withstand. And then there's a couple of active fight things like the sword and the shield perhaps. Does that kind of make sense to lay that foundation?
John Bytheway:	00:34:19	Mm-hmm.
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:34:20	And why is this important? Because we're wrestling with the world. And what must we do? We are going to have to withstand the world so that we can feel the Spirit to receive revelation and to be able to accept the words of the prophet, seers, and revelators to understand the mysteries of how we can become new creatures in Christ. And there will be times like Paul is a perfect example. You're going to have to go out and fight, but don't go out there without the protection of God.
	00:34:44	I'll even say it this boldly, the grace of God is make sure you put on the whole armor not a piece of armor. And then of course what he does as you know is he goes through and he says, verse 14 starts off, "So continue stand histemi. Continue abide, hold up, be upright in a position therefore having your loins gird about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness. Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. But above all take the shield of faith wherewith you're able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked. Take on the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."
	00:35:29	Here comes back why we're talking about is Paul in this whole book is saying, Here's what you do to have the Spirit. Here's

what you have to avoid to have the Spirit. It comes down because it says praying always with all power and its supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. And for me, the utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly, or in other words, anthistemi to make known what? The mystery of the gospel.

00:35:59 And here comes the mystery. But when we start to look at this Armor of God situation is really so important and I think it's such a powerful visual. And Paul would've seen legions, the Roman legions. He would've seen that. There's no doubt about that as would all the people in Ephesus because it was a port city and it was also a place where they would embark and go to other parts of the Roman Empire as far as that goes. But one of the great things that I think is worth considering here is I would call it even landmark and where did it come from? A prophet, seer, and revelator who talked about the Armor of God in a unique way, and that's a Harold B. Lee experience where he starts to talk about what that means, et cetera. And he says, "Okay. Paul is using imagery here." What we're trying to protect is the kill zones in literal physical ways.

00:36:47 Head protect your brain, protect your chest because it has your lungs, protect your loins, the vital organs, intestinal, et cetera as far as that goes. And protect your feet. Some people say, "Hold on. You can have your foot amputated and you're not going to die kind of thing." But in battle that your feet represent mobility. If you are wrestled, knocked down, then they will attack all other vital organs and you will lose the conquest. Mobility ability to retreat when necessary, ability to advance when necessary or ability to histemi is to hold fast and maintain in the holy place.

00:37:29 Now, when it talks about that, it says, "Okay. Here's what you're going to do. You're going to have your feet shod." I always thought that this was like shin guards, but it's your feet that are shod here as the armor. And the Romans actually did this as they would wear sandals and you'd think they should be wearing boots, steel-toed boots or something like that. But the Romans actually, the soldiers, they would wear what they often called hobnailed sandals.

00:37:54 They would take spikes and drive them through the soles of their sandals. So, they would go on the outside. So that's where they were hobnailed. And then they would bend the nails over. It's the equivalent of what we would call today as cleats. Cleats that would give them traction to move forward when necessary

for victory or to retreat or to hold their line. So, they understood the value of that one is mobility and they shod their feet with something that would help them to advance or retreat or to hold their line.

00:38:24 So each one of these pieces of armor is saying, "Okay. So how do we protect your mobility? Hobnailed sandals. How do we protect your loins? Oh, you better put the girdle on. How do you protect your chest? That part will put on a breastplate, wear a helmet of course." But Paul says, We're not wrestling in flesh but we're wrestling against these greater concepts. What does this mean?

00:38:45 Now this is where Harold B. Lee comes in and he says, Hey look, you can look at your brain here as your thoughts. We need to protect our thoughts. And he's talking about discipleship now. I think it ties in with yielding to the enticing of the Spirit, putting off the natural man. You need to think the thoughts. So, he says, What do you do with that? You put on your helmet. How do you protect your thoughts as a disciple? You put on your helmet of salvation, of salvation.

00:39:12 What does that mean? Well, read King Benjamin's talk. You know this. We all know this one. As he comes down, he says, "I was salvation. The salvation comes by no other name than Jesus Christ." So, in other words, put on the helmet of Jesus Christ. He will help you with your thoughts to think the right thoughts and to change your thoughts and to be able to manifest new thoughts, et cetera.

00:39:32 Harold B. Lee goes on to say is the breastplate of righteousness when it comes down to it, the breastplate is righteousness. It's your actions, your obedience. It's your dedication to it. How do you do that? Well, that will protect you. Every time you're righteous, it's like putting on a layer of a sense of a breastplate. It's a layer of the invisible force field, if you will. And the more righteous we become, the thicker our breastplate is, and then what is represented by our loins. And he says, that's virtue. That's your chastity.

00:40:03 In the day and age that you're living in is you're going to have to protect your chaste thoughts, your virtue, your chastity. Think about that one. Joseph Smith said, "That's going to be the greatest temptations as elders of Israel is our chastity." So how do you protect it? What does Paul say? Here's how you protect virtue in the last days is with truth. And you think about the lies that go out there about everything that deals with sexuality and

everything that does with our virtue, our morality. And then how do you protect your feet?

00:40:33 Preparation in the gospel of peace? And you're like, "Well, how does that mean?" How do you protect your objectives, your goals, your movement, where you're going in your life? Make sure that you're prepared in the gospel of peace. The gospel will teach you so many things to be prepared. It will cause you to look at things differently. It's like CS Lewis where he says, "I believe in Christ as I do the noonday sun. Not because I see it," meaning the sun, "but because by it I see everything else." It's going to change your plans and where you're trying to go in your movement, et cetera.

00:41:06 I think it's really cool that he says we need to have our mysteries solved. And mysteries can be solved and they're going to come through revelation, both personal and through prophets, seers, and revelators. And you're going to be in this world figuring this out and it's going to be a mess. So, here's some things you can do to help you have the Spirit and here's some things you best avoid because it will distance you from the Spirit and therefore you will not receive revelation personally and you will not be in a position to hear the words of the prophet, and you'll dismiss them because they sound like foolishness to the world. But there's hope here. While you're working this one through saints in Ephesus, whether you're a brand new convert or you're thinking about joining, or whether you've evolved to the point where you're settled within your conversion and it's deep in your heart, you need to make sure you put on the Armor of God.

00:41:58 You need to have thoughts and think like Christ. You need to be protected by keeping the commandments, the breastplates of being righteous or doing righteous things. You need to know the truth to protect your morality and your virtue, and you need to make sure that you are having the gospel of Jesus Christ as your means of movement so that you can retreat when necessary and know when to retreat and advance and know when to advance or when it's time to hunker down and to be able to maintain and stand in holy places.

00:42:34 I love this. And then it says, "Don't forget your shield when it comes down to it." It says, "Make sure that you have the shield of faith," which by the way, is that a weapon or is that a protection? For the Romans, by the way, it was both. They use it for battering rams and it was movable. I love this imagery. So if you're getting attacked from atop and they're pouring that hot chicken noodle soup that they used to do off of castle walls

when you're sieging or whatever, move it up here, move it here. Go to wherever the added protection is needed. And what is it that's going to protect your thoughts when you're in a barrage? Faith. Puts a shield of faith up there as well as let your thoughts be centered upon Christ.

00:43:14 If you're in a moment of weakness, put it down here to cover while you're trying to keep the commandments long enough to get your strength there so that you'll be able to have your righteousness within you. If you need to learn more truth about morality and your virtue, add your faith. And then also I like that. And then of course it's not only the shield, but you also have the sword and the sword of the Spirit that's going to direct you and that sometimes is your offensive weapon.

00:43:38 So it's kind of a cool thing. Now, I'll just add one last thought on this one. Just food for thought. So here Paul established this Armor of God is big time. I remember the church did a video of the Armor of God for seminaries and institutes.

Hank Smith: 00:43:52 I remember that, yeah. The song. Yeah, I remember the song.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:43:57 They did a nice job of saying, "Look, you may not wear literal armor but you're still wrestling with the same problems. So, you're going to be okay. Make sure that you're protecting your thoughts and your morality and your righteousness. Make sure that your motivation, and your direction, your movement is determined by the gospel. Make sure that you have faith and you're using it the best that you can in times of need. Put it where you have to double up, et cetera. I just love that one and the imagery. But then all of a sudden you see this Armor of God, almost word for word passage. Once again, this great passage here of protection for the saints and where you see it almost word for word is D&C Section 27.

00:44:31 And it was added on to that section, Section 27, as we know if you were to read through that is dealing with sacrament. It's dealing with the emblems of the sacrament. Then it talks about the great sacraments of the past that we remember the Passover, talks about the great sacrament meeting that we will have in the future, which seems clearly to be at the gathering of Israel in the last days of Adam-oni-Ahman, et cetera, kind of a thing and is saying, "Hey, this is what we do and that's what sacrament does." It causes a look to the past, but look to the coming of the Savior again. And then all of a sudden out of the blue it says, "Wherefore," comes down on that one, it says, "Take unto you the whole Armor of God," in Section 27.

- 00:45:14 It's like, was the Lord revealing to Joseph and saying, "This was so good in the New Testament, we better have it in the Doctrine & Covenants too. And might as well just insert it here in Section 27." Perhaps that's the case or maybe it's tied to the sacrament. So, there's some interesting thoughts of that one and I think it's worth at least looking at it. We partake of the sacrament on a weekly basis when we possibly can. Is it possible that our sacrament meetings is the locker room for the saints where they're readjusting, putting their Armor of God back on through the sacrament experience? If you think through the sacramental prayers, there's some interesting ties on that one is that we promise that we'll always remember him, that our thoughts will be focused upon him at all times.
- 00:45:58 Is that putting on the helmet of salvation through our sacramental covenants and we are promising this week? My thoughts will be centered and focused on the Savior and he will determine my thoughts. Is there any merit to the fact that we promise when we partake of the sacrament and that we promise that we will keep his commandments?
- 00:46:18 Is that possibly adjusting the breastplate of righteousness and our commitment to be more righteous? Is it possible that when it comes down to putting on the girdle of truth that there's something about our commitment and the process we do and our sacramental covenants that we will always have his spirit to be with us because only the Spirit can teach us truth in every circumstance, every situation? And therefore, when you're going to need it the most is if you have the Spirit to be with you. You'll either avoid compromising your morality or your virtue or it will help you to learn to escape like Joseph of Egypt.
- 00:46:57 I think there's something that might be there. And then of course if you look at the feet, shod where the gospel of peace is, we promise that we'll take the Savior's name upon us and that it will guide and direct us. And the way that he lived will be our guiding force and our motivation. I just can't help but think of whenever I read in Ephesians, and I love the Armor of God, and I see the practical use of that. There's so many applications of that. I think also of D&C Section 27, and I can't help be grateful, at least for me personally, that I have a chance. For me, I can see a connection there for me.
- 00:47:36 I love going to my sacrament meeting and thinking, "Okay, this is more than just thinking about what I need to do better. This is also my protection so that I might be able to stand and withstand in my day this week. It's an interesting element there.

And then I have the sword of the Spirit and then of course my protection of faith.

- Hank Smith: 00:47:59 I've often told the youth that I've spoken to as we talk about the Armor of God, it's a fun thing to talk about with youth that most of it to me doesn't sound super comfortable. It's not the hoodie of happiness, it's the breastplate of righteousness. It's not the pajamas. This doesn't sound super comfortable, but yet it's not there to be comfortable, it's there to protect me. Oftentimes in the gospel, I want it to be a little more comfortable. I want these principles and doctrines to be a little more comfortable for me, make it a little easier for me. But that's not its purpose. Its purpose is to protect me. I can deal with the uncomfortable knowing that it's protecting me.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:38 You guys probably remember when they used to have this thing at BYU called the CES symposium. I'm still hanging on to some of those cassette tapes I've got from those wonderful, wonderful sessions. But Elder Jeffrey R. Holland spoke in one of those about the Armor of God. I don't know. It just sounded like an offhanded comment, but I loved what you've talked about, Matt, because it reminded me of this. He said, "Most of this is defensive." Are we just supposed to get beat up by the world? He said, "No, the weapon that is mentioned, which allows us to actually do battle with the world is the sword of the Spirit."
- 00:49:14 I'm so glad you tied Section 27 into that because every week those priests at the sacrament table help us re-arm by saying, "We can always have the Spirit to be with us." And when I read the Book of Mormon, the demise of the Nephites when Mormon and Moroni are having this conversation at the end, I fear the Spirit of the Lord has ceased striving with them. And it wasn't they're doing this, they're doing this, they're doing this, they're doing this. As you have put it so well today, Matt, this whole thing is keep the Spirit of the Lord with you. That's what brought down the Nephites. They've lost the Spirit of the Lord.
- 00:49:52 When those young priests get up and promise us that if we will always remember him, take his name upon us, keep his commandments, which he's given us, we can always have his spirit, that sword to be with us. Boy, that's what I always think about, and I've heard Hank say this many times and I love it. Don't confuse your friends and your enemies. That sword of the Spirit is so helpful and discerning. Who are our friends in this world and who are our enemies? That's where I go to when I think about this. We're not wrestling against other enemies in the Mediterranean who have their ships. We are wrestling against powers, rulers of darkness. Oh, wow. We are going to

need this kind of armor. We're going to need the Spirit of the Lord and the sword of the Spirit. I just love this metaphor.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:50:46

That's so good. As a matter of fact, it sounds like we're going to need grace. And that's what Paul says. We need the grace of Christ, but we must be doing our part. John, I'm glad you brought that one up and I was touched by that imagery as well is every once in a while I look at the Aaronic priesthood who are administering such an important process of this one. And I cannot help but think in my mind of stripling warriors of individuals who are going into battle and yet they're providing this for like the stripling warriors did for their fathers who had not. They step in and there's an image there. Does that help young men aspire to be more by administering the sacrament? I believe it does.

00:51:28

Are they there yet? Not quite. Perhaps some are. But all of this combined and the way that you're talking about that and where we are fellow citizens in the household of faith. And that sacrament service becomes not just a time where we reflect, but it is a time of suiting up. It's a suiting up and seeing more. IT is. It's an armor up experience. Well said. And why is that so powerful? I guess to some, it's a mystery, but those who see it and those who embrace it, Hank, to your comment, it is uncomfortable. I don't think that that's why the Lord designed it. He says sometimes we think about this with prophets, seers, and revelators. What are the prophets, revelators thinking of to make our lives miserable? No more pizzas.

Hank Smith: 00:52:14

They're having fun. They must be stopped.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:52:19

I don't think it was designed to be uncomfortable, but it's uncomfortable to the natural man. Like you're saying. There's no doubt about it. But here's the weird part. I think all of us to certain degrees have experienced this. The uncomfortable becomes comfortable probably because we start to change. So, I saw this with missionaries is where, "Oh, I can't wear a tie. I'm dying." Sisters, "why do I have to wear matching ensembles or whatever?" I didn't even know what an ensemble was.

00:52:51

But here's the interesting thought. When they first come out, all the standards, they don't call them rules... In our mission, we never called them rules. We called them standards, missionary standards for disciples of Jesus Christ. And it's hard because we are natural individuals when we come onto our missionary service and called to do some things that are uncomfortable but are really, in my opinion, every standard in the missionary book is for protection.

	00:53:18	There's a reason you can't go swimming, and it's not because Satan is going to take your soul, it's because we'll start diving into two feet of water and do something crazy. But it's a little uncomfortable. But that armor becomes comfortable as we change. And pretty soon missionaries, they don't even think twice. They don't even know they're wearing a tie. They don't know that they're wearing sensible footwear kind of a thing. It becomes part of them. And you're right, Hank, it's uncomfortable, but I found that those who stick with it and they wear Armor of God, it's almost as if they don't know that they're wearing it and they are running around and they're playing basketball, they're playing tag in their armor and they have become accustomed, or in other words, they became new creatures in the force of wearing the protection. It's really quite lovely and beautiful.
Hank Smith:	00:54:09	These new creatures can wear this and it becomes comfortable to them.
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:54:14	Yeah. Why do they wear it? Because that's who they are. That's what they do.
Hank Smith:	00:54:18	It's not a burden, it's a quest.
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:54:21	Here's an interesting thought if you know Roman warfare as far as that goes, is they used a shorter sword because they would fight in proximity. So, when they would get in there, they were lethal when they were in hand-to-hand combat, but they used their shield and their sword in unison where sometimes there's a movement shield up and then you can go underneath with this short sword and stuff. So, think of the imagery that you could use on that one as using the shield and the sword together in the Armor of God.
	00:54:46	But they also used it in situations... You see this in movies, but they actually would do it, is you would combine where they would use the shield with other warriors and they would make a little pod.
Hank Smith:	00:54:58	Yeah, they could connect them together. A little tortoise-like shell.
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:54:59	They would connect them together. Some would put it on top and some would make the outer wall. They still had mobility so they could move, but they were like in what we would call today a tank. Now think about that concept of strangers and foreigners now being unified in one faith and in one gospel

where we combine our faith in the different sizes and shapes that that shield comes from, and we link ourselves together to protect our families, our congregations, our friends. There's something special about this is the Armor of God is not just for the solo protection of an individual, but it is used when we are strong. Then the one becomes the many and no wonder we're organized in quorums and classes, and wards, and stakes, and families, and marriages, is that we link our armor together in something that protects not just me, but we. It's actually quite lovely. It's beautiful.

Hank Smith: 00:56:02 Love it. I remember talking about that. It's the tortoise formation.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 00:56:06 Oh, I like it. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:56:08 Matt, you've centered your message today on this, and John, you brought it up earlier with come back to the Spirit, come back to getting the Spirit. Whenever possible. I like to emphasize one role of the Holy Ghost, which is maybe even the least understood, but maybe the most applicable is the role of the Holy Ghost in bringing the Atonement into your life. Two quotes from President Eyring, "if you have felt the influence of the Holy Ghost during this day or even this evening", he's talking to a group of young adults. "If you have felt the Holy Ghost, you may take it as evidence that the Atonement is working in your life."

00:56:50 And then on a different occasion, he said, "reception of the Holy Ghost is the cleansing agent as the Atonement purifies you. And when the Holy Ghost is your companion, you can have confidence that the Atonement is working in your life." I just love whenever I get a chance to tie the Spirit to the Atonement because the power of the Spirit is bringing the power of the Savior's Atonement into your heart and mind. Just like the Spirit can enter your heart and mind.

John Bytheway: 00:57:23 Yeah. If you ever have those kind of inklings of the Spirit, what is that telling you? That's telling you you're on the path. I feel like that's telling you, you're feeling the Spirit. The Atonement is working. That's what you just said, that President Eyring said. For so many of us who feel beat up and I'm not good enough or whatever, well, that very feeling, the fact that that may come from the Spirit, kind of a wretched man that I am type feeling is telling you, "No, you're okay because you're feeling that right now." The Atonement is working in you. That's a wonderful evidence that it's working.

Hank Smith:	00:57:56	Yeah. There's an Ephesians type moment, again, from President Eyring. We could just bring in where President Eyring talks about speaking of each other in the best light possible. He says, "The Lord will let you feel his appreciation for you choosing to step away from the possibility of sowing seeds of disunity." And then this is 2008, so this is 15 years ago. He said, "You must follow that same principle as the Lord gathers more and more people who are not like us." Almost like President Eyring in 2008 is seeing we're going to see more nations brought into this, more and more different types of people.
	00:58:41	He says, "What will become more obvious to us is that the Atonement brings the same changes in all of us. We become disciples who are meek, loving, easy to be entreated, and at the same time fearless and faithful in all things. We still live in different countries, but we come into the church through a process that changes us. We become by the gifts of the Spirit, what the Apostle Paul saw 'for through him, we both have access by one Spirit unto the father. Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints in the household of God.'"
	00:59:18	And then this last statement. "With the unity I see increasing, the Lord will be able to perform what the world will think as miraculous." That seems to tie in Ephesians all up in one.
Dr. Matt Richardson:	00:59:32	Well, I love that thought and I think President Eyring is really illuminating the things that have been taught by prophets, seers, and revelators. And not only miraculous, but as I mentioned, it's mysterious to many and that's the saddest part is in many cases there are so many of God's children, they don't know where to find the truth. They don't know where to find it. I've seen this through my own personal experience and then going out in the world, et cetera. There's so many people who want to do the right thing and they're trying.
	00:59:59	So many of our saints, they want to do the right thing, but they're not quite sure how. So, I love this experience where miracles are brought forth because the revelators, what they do is they reveal. That's what revelator means is to reveal. It's almost like taking something that has a covering on it and saying, "Ta-da." And in so many ways what they're doing is revealing what saints can do to be able to receive the miracles because I think God is generous and he wants things to be in our lives that are like His.
	01:00:27	That's the whole point. But for me is looking at Ephesians, there's a lot of ways that one can read this and glean from it. So

many things that I've learned today in our discussions from just different viewpoints, and I think that you can gain something by reading this. It's a short book, but I think also you can gain a lot by understanding the context. And all of a sudden you start to see piece by piece coming together. It's like this grand jigsaw puzzle and you're seeing this coming together and you're saying, "This is why."

01:00:54 They would say warning. But one thought here is I can't just help but look at the way that Paul ended his letter. And whether this was the actual ending, I don't know, but it's the way that we have of the remnant text. Usually for me when I write letters or communicate with others, my goodbyes are usually where I think I better say something good here kind of thing. And that's usually where we talk about, "Sure love you." We go through the things that are probably the things of our heart, or at least to be able to put... I don't want to be dramatic, but maybe the exclamation point to our efforts rather than just a period.

01:01:31 And I look at Paul's ending after all that he has done, and regardless of where the saints in Ephesus are, I just can't help but think of that. This is a message for all and everyone can glean from this. He says, "I am in," verse 20, this is chapter 6, verse 20, "I am an ambassador that therein I may speak boldly." And here is coming back to this concept where it goes through and it says the letters of Paul and the writings of Paul's are always a vigorous expression of his person that I may speak boldly. I just love that, as I ought to speak.

01:02:10 But then he goes and he says, "But that ye may also know my affairs and how I do." And he says, "The Lord will make known," and he talks about Tychicus here and it goes through, "make known unto you all things". There's the message. The Lord wants you to know these things. So, I've been talking about all this stuff, mystery. Bottom line, what I want you to know more than anything else before I hang up the phone, before I sign my name, before I give my ado, is it comes down, is that the Lord wants and shall make known unto you all things.

01:02:41 Then he goes on, "Peace be to the brethren and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Don't you think that's wonderful? It's not grace be to all of them who are doing everything that the Lord said to do, but every single one of us, all of us, wherever we are in our progression, we all can manifest our sincere love for the Lord, whether it's in trial or triumph. I just love the way Paul words these things and he says, "Grace will be, the power of God will be upon all those

who will love the Lord Jesus Christ." Its sincerity. And he says, "I will make known to all those wherever they are more of my truth and those things that are troubling you and are not known" and wondering if things will ever work out, if my children will return, if my health will sustain, if I'll ever find love in my life, if I'll ever find joy and peace in just waking up in the day or if I can get out of bed.

01:03:56 There's something about this. This is the message of Jesus Christ is for all of his children. And how does that come? Well, I guess we could call everybody and say, "You're doing great," which might be helpful. But when the Spirit calls and we feel the grace of Jesus Christ upon us, is there any wonder why we're striving to have the Spirit with us, to validate those times when we cannot find validations, where we can fill the assurance and confidence in the Atonement of Jesus Christ, which is far more than just to be able to compensate for our sins? But it helps us to overcome all things and including our own arrogance and including to be able to understand and frame the good times in our life. The Atonement is just as valuable then as it is for overcoming the deaths. And so isn't Paul great?

Hank Smith: 01:04:43 Yeah.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 01:04:44 Isn't he wonderful and doesn't he do a good job? Because this is a very personal letter to individuals who need a personal push, but it applies to all. Whenever I can come across and say that I can have greater faith, that I can have more peace, and then my hearts, I like that part. My heart might be comforted and that I can have peace. I'm all over it, so I just love the way Paul just says his goodbye before he says his Amen. He ends with those three short verses there, which are really what this whole chapter or what this whole book is about.

Hank Smith: 01:05:14 Wonderful. John, what a great day we've had with Dr. Richardson.

John Bytheway: 01:05:21 Yep. Taking a lot of notes. Thank you so much, Matt.

Hank Smith: 01:05:24 Matt, it's been a treat to have you.

Dr. Matt Richardson: 01:05:27 Oh, it's been my pleasure. Thank you for letting me be part of just this discussion and to be fed like this. This is a beautiful blessing.

Hank Smith: 01:05:34 I'm sure our listeners are happy. Time well spent. We want to thank Dr. Matt Richardson for being with us today. We also

want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We have another episode of followHIM.

01:05:56 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. 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.

President Nelson: 01:06:35 Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him, follow him.

WHY DO WE HAVE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES?



Hank Smith:	00:02	Hello, my friends. Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	00:08	Hi, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:09	John, we're going to have a great day today in FollowHIM Favorites. You know the routine. We're going to take a single question from this week's lesson, which is in the Book of Ephesians. John, the question comes straight out of the manual after reading some chapters in Ephesians about prophets and apostles. It says, "Why do we have prophets and apostles? Think about the messages from prophets and apostles you heard during general conference. How do their teachings fulfill the purposes Paul described?" John, what would you say to, "Why do we have prophets and apostles and what have they done for you?"
John Bytheway:	00:40	When you ask that question, this tune is going through my head. To guide us in these latter days. We've got latter day problems, we've got latter day jargon and technology that they didn't have back then. Maybe that's a wonderful reason. I think when I was on my mission back in the '80s, one of the discussions I memorized, as they used to call them, was whenever God has had His children on the earth, He's communicated with them through a prophet. That's someone we can look to to help guide us with what God wants us to know.
Hank Smith:	01:13	Absolutely. John, just personally, when I think back upon the general conference messages I have read and how I've been personally affected by some of these talks that literally have changed my life, Elder Bednar, his first full talk in conference, the tender mercies of the Lord, literally changed my life. Elder Holland, the high priest of good things to come, and recently President Nelson's messages, just the one from this recent conference, peacemakers needed.
John Bytheway:	01:48	Peacemakers needed.

Hank Smith:	01:50	These are life-changing messages.
John Bytheway:	01:53	Yeah. So thankful for those. Elder Holland's message called a Prayer for the Children. Wow. I'm so grateful for those, because keeping us on the covenant path and joyfully keeping us on the covenant path, I'm really thankful for prophets and church leaders for our General Relief Society Presidency, and General Young Women's Presidency, and how they've affected my daughters in the talks that they've given. Absolutely.
Hank Smith:	02:20	Sister Dalton's, I remember her messages on virtue 10 years ago, just changed me. Maybe it would be good for our listeners to make a list of conference talks that have changed their life, that they still continue to think about and use, and how they've pointed them towards the Savior and His Atonement. Then we might see the answer to that question in your own life. Why do we have prophets and apostles?
John Bytheway:	02:47	In preparation for conference, because I've had so many students, I ask them before a conference, what are your questions? And sit down and watch what might happen, because a lot of you will get answers if you're intently listening.
Hank Smith:	02:59	Beautiful. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called FollowHIM. This week we're with Dr. Matthew Richardson, and he walks through Ephesians in a beautiful way. We think you're going to love it. Then come back, join us here next week for another FollowHIM Favorites.