



“Perfect That Which is Lacking in Your Faith”

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:

Have you ever wondered what ancient letters to a small Christian community can teach us about thriving in a modern world of challenges and uncertainties? Professor Dale Sturm teaches about the importance of loving one another, the power of hope, and how the gospel of Jesus Christ allows us to experience joy amidst affliction.

Part 2:

Professor Dale Sturm shares the joys of living the covenant path during this lifetime and the next while examining Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians.

Timecodes:

Part 1

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- 02:03 Introduction of Professor Dale Sturm
- 04:13 Background to Thessalonica, Paul and Silas
- 06:54 Thessalonica is a free city
- 09:28 Acts 17 review, Silas, and Timothy
- 14:33 The “baser sort”
- 17:00 Paul is escorted out of town
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- 21:10 Timing of 1 Thessalonians
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Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Professor Dale Sturm
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- 2:08 Pursuing sanctification
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- 33:25 Following up and good sources
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- 39:27 Standing vs compromising
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- 44:28 Counsel for helping those who have walked away
- 49:38 Professor Sturm's takeaways from the lesson
- 52:59 End of Part II– Professor Dale Sturm

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Biographical Information:



Dale Sturm is a native of California, born in Sacramento and raised in Thousand Oaks. He and his wife Valerie currently live on a horse ranch just outside of Rexburg, Idaho. Dale has spent his career in the Church Educational System, teaching first in seminaries in Malta, Idaho and Twin Falls, Idaho; then a season writing curriculum for Seminaries and Institutes in Salt Lake City, and two years teaching at the Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah. He joined the faculty of the Dept. of Religious Education at BYU-Idaho in 2004, and served as the Chair of that department from 2010-2015. He holds degrees in English Literature, Instructional Design, and Theology. He did his doctoral work in Biblical Studies at Amridge University focusing on Bible translations.

Dale and Valerie spent three years serving as Mission Leaders in the beautiful Iowa Iowa City Mission. They have five children and eleven grandchildren (with two more due in 2024).

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Hank Smith:	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 marvelous co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome, John, to another week of FollowHIM.
John Bytheway:	00:15	Yeah, I marvel that I'm here too. Can't believe it.
Hank Smith:	00:18	I marvel that you are here, John. John, we have been studying the letters of Paul here for quite a few weeks. What have you learned so far? What stood out to you?
John Bytheway:	00:28	It's fun to see where Paul goes. I feel like I might have a tendency, okay, I went there, I did my job, now I'm going home. But Paul feels connected to these places where he's gone. He feels connected to the people, and you can feel it in the letters he writes to them. He's praying for them, he feels connected to them, and I like that his service was heart, might, mind and strength.
Hank Smith:	00:49	Yeah, it does feel that way as he's going from place to place, it looks like he's just adding to his plate. More people he's worried about. More congregations he's worried about writing to.
	00:59	John, we have a wonderful guest with us today. His name is Dale Sturm, he teaches up in BYU Idaho, one of our friends up there. Dale, we are in First and Second Thessalonians today. What are we looking forward to?
Professor Dale Sturm:	01:10	First and Second Thessalonians is unique in a bunch of ways, and maybe one is that it's among the earliest, if not the earliest, New Testament document. This could be the first letter Paul wrote. Some would say Galatians maybe is ahead of this one, but others think this is first. These are people that he loves. You just have this ebullient affection expressed through this letter. Both of these letters, neither of them is full of corrections, it's not a First Corinthians kind of letter. It's really encouraging, which becomes almost poignant, when we start to understand where Thessalonica is, and who are these people, and the sacrifices they've made to come to Christ.

Hank Smith:	01:53	That's fantastic. I'm looking forward to this. As I've watched Paul in First and Second Corinthians, it feels like he's pulling his hair out, just like, "I cannot get things straight over there." But it's good to hear that things are going well for the Thessalonians. John, Dale is new to our podcast. Why don't you introduce him to us?
John Bytheway:	02:11	Yes, I'm so glad you're coming from southern Idaho. I'm part Idaho. My grandfather was raised there. Brother Sturm was raised in Thousand Oaks, California. He served as a missionary in the Japan Kobe mission, so a big konnichiwa to you.
Professor Dale Sturm:	02:26	Konnichiwa.
John Bytheway:	02:27	He has a Bachelors degree from BYU, a Masters from Utah State University, and also a Masters degree in Theology from Campbellsville University in Campbellsville, Kentucky. He's done PhD work at Amridge University in Biblical Studies. He began teaching for seminaries and institutes in 1987, and in 1995 was transferred to the church office building to write curriculum. So he actually wrote seminary movies and lessons for seven years. I bet we've seen some of those, Hank.
	02:57	He spent a couple of years at the institute adjacent to the University of Utah, and came to BYU Idaho in 2004. Dale and his wife, Valerie, have five children, 11 grandchildren, and two more grandchildren on the way. That sounds really wonderful. We live on a horse ranch and raise Tennessee walking horses.
	03:18	They also spent three years serving in the Iowa, Iowa City Mission, which is a remarkable place. Nauvoo, Carthage, and all those areas are part of the Mission, part of the Pioneer Trail. And we're really looking forward to being with you, going from Kentucky, to Thousand Oaks, to Idaho. Now we're going to go to Thessalonica.
	03:39	So welcome, Dale, we're really happy to have you. Thank you for joining us today.
Professor Dale Sturm:	03:43	Thank you. It's great to be here.
Hank Smith:	03:46	We are excited. I have a lot of friends that teach up in Rexburg at BYU Idaho, and every time, "Have you had Dale on your podcast yet?" You are beloved by your colleagues up at BYU Idaho.
Professor Dale Sturm:	03:57	Or I'm their gopher. They use me to... I'm the utility infielder.

John Bytheway:	04:02	Yeah, have you had Dale yet?
Professor Dale Sturm:	04:05	There you go. That's right. That's right.
Hank Smith:	04:08	That's fantastic.
Professor Dale Sturm:	04:10	And it's a pleasure to be with you both.
Hank Smith:	04:13	Dale, I'm going to read a little bit from the manual here, and then we'll hand it over to you and see where you want to go. The manual says this, "In Thessalonica, Paul and Silas were accused of having turned the world upside down. Their preaching angered certain leaders among the Jews, and those leaders stirred the people up in an uproar. As a result, Paul and Silas were advised to leave Thessalonica. Paul worried about the new Thessalonian converts and the persecution they were facing, but he was unable to return to visit them. 'When I could no longer forebear,' he wrote, 'I sent to know your faith.' In response, Paul's assistant Timothy, who had been serving in Thessalonica, brought us good tidings of your faith and charity.
	04:51	"In fact, the Thessalonian saints were known as examples to all that believe. And news of their faith spread to cities abroad. Imagine Paul's joy and relief to hear that his work among them was not in vain. But Paul knew that faithfulness in the past is not sufficient for spiritual survival in the future, and he was wary of the influence of false teachers among the saints. His message to them, and to us, is to continue to perfect that which is lacking in our faith and to increase more and more in love."
	05:22	Great opening statements here from the manual. Where do you want to go?
Professor Dale Sturm:	05:25	I agree with you. I think that those introductory paragraphs are really apt. It would be useful to just talk about this place, because it is unique. Today it's Thessaloniki, but it's one of the longest continuously inhabited parts of the Roman Empire, and founded by a Macedonian king named Cassander who named it after his wife, Thessalonike, meaning the victory of Thessaly. In Koine Greek, it's Thessalonike, modern Thessalonice, and we'll probably just call it Thessalonica.
	06:00	It's situated in an interesting spot. It's on the north shore of a beautiful, large, deep, well-protected harbor. Sits at the foot of a mountain. Going immediately north are trade routes into Europe, and it straddles a very important Roman highway, the Via Egnatia. It was like a Roman expressway. It connected the

western side of Macedonia, that is the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea, all the way to Byzantium, to modern Istanbul. There you have this east west road, and not only that, on the Adriatic Sea where it ends there at Dyrrachium, right across the Adriatic Sea was the end of the Appian Way, which leads north and west to Rome. So, they had this, pretty much an expressway, that could get you from Rome to Byzantium, and you had to go through Thessaloniki.

Hank Smith: 06:54

Ah. Okay.

Professor Dale Sturm: 06:55

It also has this really interesting history. Through its rises and falls in Roman history, it ends up being granted the status of a free city, which is really significant in Rome. Probably the most practical things that come from that was, it was tax-free. They didn't have to pay Imperial tax. And they were self-governing. They didn't have a Roman procurator, they didn't have Roman policing, via Roman military.

John Bytheway: 07:24

Wow.

Professor Dale Sturm: 07:24

That little town council, which we're going to actually meet in Acts, it's this town council that Jason has to go in front of.

07:31

And so, they really cherished this status and the privileges that they got from being a free city. There was a sense there, that in order to maintain this independence and this liberty, we have to show great loyalty to the emperor. There was a temple to the Caesars there. Emperor worship, the Lord and living god, the emperor, was a really important thing in Thessalonica. This will create a little bit of trouble, that even people of other religions, because of Roman syncretism, were expected to regularly make offerings at this temple to the emperor.

08:14

Public meetings would begin with the offering of a pinch of incense to the emperor. You were expected to do it regularly, personally, but also, anytime they gathered as a municipality, there would be some emperor worship. Of course, this is really hard for the Jewish people there, and those who will become Christian. Much of the difficulty that they're going to experience, the new Christians are going to experience there, is because of the pressure locally that you could be threatening this very comfortable circumstance we have here that is Christianity, could cause Rome to change our status.

John Bytheway: 08:53

Oh, wow.

Professor Dale Sturm:	08:53	That's sort of a unique thing that the Thessalonians are having to deal with.
Hank Smith:	08:58	Interesting. Sounds like the political problems the early saints had as they entered Kirtland, or as they went out to Missouri, or came into Illinois. You can upset the balance of things.
Professor Dale Sturm:	09:11	I think that was the concern that the people are feeling relative to Christians, and why it's so challenging for them.
	09:17	There's probably another dimension here that we can pick up. Is it okay if we go back to Acts for just a second, and take a look at the narrative of what happened in Thessalonica?
	09:28	Let's just start in verse one of Acts 17. This is Paul's second mission journey. You'll recall, he has taken with him, as a companion, Silas. He and Barnabas had their falling out, their split, and he's got Silas with him now. And Silas is an important character that we don't talk much about. In Acts 15, we're reminded that he had served Christ at the hazard of his life, that he's hand selected by the Apostles to be their personal representative, to take the message of the Jerusalem council. I mean, Silas is kind of a big deal. At Philippi, Paul makes it clear that Silas, like Paul himself, is a Roman citizen.
	10:07	And the name Silas, by the way, that's a Semitic name. Paul's going to call him Sylvanus. Peter calls him Sylvanus, too. That's just the latinized form of the same name. But Silas is also, it's the Aramaic form of the Hebrew name Shaul, Saul. So Silas and Paul have the same, they're both named Saul in Hebrew.
	10:28	So you've got Silas with him, and we also know that he's picked up Timothy. Do you remember in Acts 16, he picks up Timothy at Lystra? This is a kind of a little powerhouse trio of missionaries, Paul, Silas, and Timothy. So, verse one of Acts 17, "Now, when they pass through Amphibolous and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica where was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures."
	10:58	He comes back three weeks in a row. You would think this indicates that they're interested, that he's welcome there. And so maybe the shift that's about to come comes as a bit of a surprise. That three weeks in a row he's been preaching in the synagogue. And verse three, "Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ."

- 11:21 So his message is, Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus is the prophesied Messiah. It's that powerful thought to the early Jewish Christians that Christianity is not a new religion. It's the logical conclusion of what they've always believed. It's the fulfillment of the prophets. That's his message. And in verse four, "And some of them believed and consorted with Paul and Silas." And then this really interesting note that's going to be significant. "And of the devout Greeks, a great multitude, and of the chief women, not a few." You get a few of the Jews, but here, Luke notes, "...of the devout Greeks, a great multitude." That word devout is a keyword. We're talking about Gentiles who are worshiping in the synagogue. Sometimes they're called the God fearers. Cornelius is one who feared God. This word devout means, at least this particular Koine Greek word, devout, means worshiping. They're coming to worship. It's not just a comment that's indicating that they're pious, they're worshipful, they're showing up.
- 12:30 In fact, six times in the book of Acts, that word is going to be used only to describe Gentiles who are participating at the synagogue. These are God fearers. They believe that Jehovah is the one true God. They believe that the teachings of Judaism, that the prophecies of the prophets, that these are true and a good guide for your life. But for whatever reason, it probably varied from person to person, they never take the step of actually becoming a proselyte to Judaism. They don't live the food laws. They don't observe the Sabbaths. They don't get circumcised, among other things. They stay on the periphery, but they're believers.
- 13:10 And I think we see people like this in the modern world, people who have faith in Christ, but for whatever reason haven't taken the step to enter into the covenant, haven't got baptized. I grew up with wonderful men like this in my ward in Southern California as a boy, people that would show up for everything. And then when you found out that they weren't actually members of the church, you were surprised. They seemed more faithful than some members.
- 13:37 But this is significant to note, that in Thessalonica, the biggest crowd for Paul is from these God fearers, these Gentiles, people who have not had much experience being on the bad side of Rome and the world. The Jews are pretty good at it. As a minority religion, they've got some privileges in the empire and certain things aren't asked of them, but that's not the case for these Gentiles who are getting interested in Paul's message.

	14:10	And then of course, the chief women are listed here. That is, these would be the women who are the opinion makers. Their husbands are in important municipal positions, and we're going to meet Jason in a minute. Perhaps his wife is one of the chief women. That's the crowd, of course, that is coming to Christ in Thessalonica.
Hank Smith:	14:30	All right, so Paul is having some influence.
Professor Dale Sturm:	14:33	Yes. But then verse five, "But the Jews which believed not moved with envy took unto them," this great King James Bible phrase, "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort."
John Bytheway:	14:47	The baser sort.
Professor Dale Sturm:	14:50	The baser sort there is translating a word that means they're hanging out in the marketplace. They're the market loiters. They're bums and thugs, and they gather up these people that have no particular interest in this, but they got nothing else to do, so they're able to engage them in their little riot.
	15:10	And they go to the house of Jason. Jason's a thoroughly Greek name. Jason, a convert from the devout Greeks, the God-fearing Greeks, not Jewish. But Paul and Silas and Timothy aren't there. They take Jason to this town council, to the rulers of the city. Again, there's no procurator. There's no centurions here. It's a self rule.
	15:34	And then the accusation, as you know in verse six is, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither."
John Bytheway:	15:43	Love it.
Professor Dale Sturm:	15:44	Yeah. These guys are changing everything. In Thessalonica, it's just worth noting that there's this additional undertone, that they're having an effect everywhere and it's causing all sorts of havoc to our social structure. But here in Thessalonica, it could challenge the very status of our city as a free city in the Roman Empire. That's a concern. Ultimately, all this council does to Jason is ask him for money. He pays a surety, some sort of guarantee that he's going to take care of it, and then they let him go.
John Bytheway:	16:19	Yeah. I love that phrase too. He turned the world upside down. I feel like way back to the beatitudes, Jesus gets up. You ask people, "Who are the happiest people?" Oh, they're self-assured, they're confident, they're independent. And Jesus,

"Well actually, blessed are the poor in spirit, and blessed are the meek, and blessed are they that mourn." Then, what? The whole gospel just turned the world upside down. So, I like that phrase, because I see examples of that all over.

Professor Dale Sturm: 16:44

That's a great point. And also, Christianity, of course, is preaching a story where the victory of God is in his execution by the Roman Empire.

John Bytheway: 16:56

Because He got killed.

Professor Dale Sturm: 16:57

Talk about an upside down narrative.

Hank Smith: 17:00

Dale, is this the point where Paul has to basically sneak out of town?

Professor Dale Sturm: 17:04

Yeah. Well, he's escorted out of town. My guess is Paul goes kicking and screaming. You know Paul, this is the Paul who wants to rush into the amphitheater, right? That Ephesus and others have to say, "Now Paul, that's probably not a good idea."

Hank Smith: 17:20

Not a good idea.

Professor Dale Sturm: 17:21

I had missionaries like that during... There'd be some sort of demonstration that everybody on the news was saying, "Stay out of downtown." And missionaries are saying, "Well, that's where all the people are. Let's go." So, I suspect that Paul had to be encouraged to leave. But yes, so in verse 10, we're still in Acts 17, "The brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night into Berea." My guess is, they're sending them to some Jewish brethren in Berea, thinking they'll be safe, they'll be protected and watched over there. And then this wonderful comment, these were more noble than those in Thessalonica. That is, the Berean Jews were more noble than the Thessalonian Jews, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

18:10

Now Berea of course, doesn't have that added concern about, what will the truths Paul is teaching actually mean to us in terms of our status? They're a little more open. And many of them believed also of the honorable women, which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. So again, a lot of Gentile converts. Remember, among the very earliest letters, this is the earliest evidence perhaps that Gentiles are coming to Christ in greater numbers, at least in Paul's experience. Once he crosses

the Aegean Sea, and now he's kind of in Europe, it's the Gentiles that he's having much more success with.

- 18:51 But, the Thessalonian Jews aren't going to leave it at that. When they find out he's in Berea, which is still a city in the Macedonian province, I think they're still concerned. That if this gets a foothold in Berea, it's going to continue to have an impact on us, and they follow him there. Verse 13, "But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea and they came hither also, and stirred up the people. And then immediately the brethren sent Paul to go as it were to the sea, but Silas and Timotheus abode there still."
- 19:23 It sounds like they're going to send him to the seashore and catch a boat to Athens, but I don't know that he ever gets on the ship. He might've gone overland down to Athens where he's supposed to lay low, but Paul being Paul-
- John Bytheway: 19:38 Yeah, he doesn't lay low in Athens either.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 19:39 Right. His spirit was stirred and off he goes and he's talking again. Then he finally rejoins his companion, Silas and Timothy at Corinth, but immediately sends Timothy back to Thessalonica. "I got to know what's going on there. I'm so worried about him, but I can't go. You need to go. We got to know what's happening there." Timothy goes, and then it's likely that after Timothy comes back and makes his report, Paul writes his first letter.
- Hank Smith: 20:07 That's where we get the letter.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 20:08 Yeah. Probably during his time at Corinth.
- Hank Smith: 20:11 Yeah. What a great reminder, and what a great connection for us to make between Acts and Thessalonians.
- John Bytheway: 20:17 Yeah. I love that we read in Acts, here's where Paul was and here's what he did, and then he writes letters to all these places knowing what happened there. It's really helpful before we read the letter, so thank you for that.
- Hank Smith: 20:31 I think in this particular case, because it's unique, it's useful to know that Thessalonica is a little different than some of the other places.

Professor Dale Sturm: 20:38 Yeah. John, I don't know if I'm right about this, but it seems that Timothy becomes kind of a mailman.

Hank Smith: 20:44 He's running all over the place delivering these letters.

20:48 I don't know how many are taken by Timothy, but it seems a couple of them so far have been, oh, by the way, Timothy is bringing this letter to you.

Professor Dale Sturm: 20:55 Do you think part of it is that he's loved and trusted, and they're disappointed that Paul can't come, but they're thrilled that Timothy's there. They love Timothy.

Hank Smith: 21:04 The junior companion is able to come. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 21:10 Where do we go from here? Dale, do you want to jump into Thessalonians?

Professor Dale Sturm: 21:12 Yeah. You want to dive into Thessalonians to the first letter?

Hank Smith: 21:15 So this very well could be the first letter that Paul wrote. Now, just for our listeners help, why is it then so late in the book? Why is it after Corinthians, and Galatians, and Ephesians, and Romans?

Professor Dale Sturm: 21:30 That's a great question. I think the first part of the response is, we're not entirely sure when the Pauline epistles are written in which order. So as the canon develops, the tradition was to order the letters of Paul, not by any supposed chronology or by topic, but oddly, by length. The way you arranged books on your shelf when you were five years old, from biggest to smallest.

21:58 So the longest ones are first, all the way down to the Philemon, the one pager. And then Hebrews is in sort of an odd spot, because there's some disputation about Pauline authorship. There's some feel that yes, Paul wrote it, others say, no, it's not Paul. And others take a middle ground saying that the thoughts are Pauline and it's clearly his arguments, but somebody else wrote it. Probably as a scribe or a minuent. Anyway, so it's long, but it's last. So, they're arranged by length.

Hank Smith: 22:29 All right, so that's why it's later on in the book here, although it could be, very well could be, the first one written.

Professor Dale Sturm: 22:35 Yeah. When you're thinking historically what happens in Thessalonica happens after what happens in Philippi, even though the letter of the Philippians comes in a different

		moment. They're right next to each other in Acts, the events, but the letters are in kind of a reverse order.
Hank Smith:	22:51	Okay. All right. Let's jump in. Does Paul start out his usual way, giving lots of praise?
Professor Dale Sturm:	22:59	Yes. But the thing is, that's what this whole letter's going to be. Rhetoricians call this kind of letter an epistolary epistle. That is, it's a letter of praise and encouragement. So yeah, he's going to start with praise, but it's really some of the best praise in the New Testament.
John Bytheway:	23:18	Okay.
Professor Dale Sturm:	23:18	I love what he says about the Thessalonians. When you hear his description of them, I think it makes you want to be like them.
Hank Smith:	23:26	Okay.
Professor Dale Sturm:	23:26	There's a couple of issues he's going to deal with, but again, as we noted, it's not like the first letter to the Corinthians, where it's a laundry list of issues that have to be dealt with. Instead, it's a lot of encouragement. And even when he's giving some correction, it's full of hope and encouragement.
Hank Smith:	23:43	Okay. This will be different than the ones we've read before, right?
Professor Dale Sturm:	23:47	Yes. If we're feeling a little beat up after Corinthians. I would also note that Paul is going to do a couple of more subtle things. You will see him use language that's going to remind the Christians, that while they live in a setting where the emperor is referred to as the Lord and the living God, the provider of peace, that in fact, it's God the Father and Jesus Christ, who are the providers of peace.
	24:17	And he starts right in first verse. He addresses it from Paul and Sylvanus. Again, Sylvanus is Silas, that's just the latinized form of his name, and Timotheus, that's Timothy, under the Church of the Thessalonians. This is maybe also a little unique. Frequently, Paul will single out individuals in the churches. This is addressed to all of them there. Pretty clearly intended to be read aloud to everybody. This isn't a letter to just the leaders or a few individuals, this is for everybody. This is to the Church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and

		the Lord, the Kyrie, and that word is the word that was used to refer to the emperor.
John Bytheway:	25:02	Wow.
Professor Dale Sturm:	25:03	But he said, "We're not talking about the Lord Augustus." We're talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the first time Paul does that probably, if this is the first letter, using the language of empire, but calling these people to remember that, really, we serve Christ.
	25:23	And then yes, his gratitude. There's a couple of great phrases here that I love. "We give thanks to God always for you all making mention of you in our prayers. We pray for you. We're so grateful for this association with you, remembering without ceasing." Then these three phrases, "Your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in," again, "...the Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father." But don't you love those three phrases, work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope? Let's just note that of there, could be translated as because of or as a result of.
	26:06	We think of the Thessalonians and we remember how you worked, because of your faith. How your faith made you work. And the word work here, ergon, is like a task. It's just your regular work. The work you do when you go out into the yard, or go to the office. And the labor, because of your love. It's a different word. This word kopos, it means strenuous effort. That works for the English labor when a woman is in childbirth, that laboring, the strenuous effort, but your effort comes because of love. You Thessalonians work hard because of your faith. You engage strenuously because of your love. And you have patience in your unique circumstance, because of your hope in Christ. It's just a wonderful set of compliments.
Hank Smith:	26:56	Yeah, I think that's wonderful.
John Bytheway:	26:58	It's kind of fun to see a phrase that we've used for years and maybe sometimes we go, oh, that's a biblical phrase. You're working hard at something and people are surprised and well, it's a labor of love, you know? And you're like, that's a Paul phrase. It's kind of fun to hear those and to connect that. But it's kind of like sweet is the work, or reminds me of the hymn. Yeah, it's work, but it's sweet. It's a labor of love. I like this.
Professor Dale Sturm:	27:23	Perhaps the world doesn't think of love as inducing one to strenuous effort. The world's sort of romantic view of love is,

love should make everything easy. Love brings puppy dogs and rainbows. But here, Paul seems to be noting that among you, love has created a desire to sacrifice and not quit and keep serving.

- Hank Smith: 27:48 Dale, this opening part here by Paul reminds me of way back in the 1900s, way back in 1997. I remember listening to this talk from President Hinckley. I talk quite a bit about President Hinckley on the podcast. I'm absolutely 100% been behind President Nelson. And there is something about President Hinckley that is my surrogate grandfather when I was young. And I remember him saying this, this is October of 1997. He talked about the members of the Church being Latter-day Saints indeed.
- 28:19 And then he said this. He said, "I have a confession to make my brothers and sisters." And I remember hearing that going, what? President Hinckley has a confession to make? "I have a confession to make my brothers and sisters. It is simply this, I love you. I love the people of this church. I love all who are faithful. I love all who follow the ways of the Lord. It is a humbling thing to preside over the church. I can never forget the words of Jesus. 'He that would be first among you. Let him be the servant of all.' Thank you for your prayers, your trust, your confidence. I am deeply grateful for all who have generously assisted in helping us to do our duty." It seems like a leader of the church thing to do here, is to just gush with love for members of the church.
- John Bytheway: 29:06 I think there was an earthquake or something in Columbia or a flood, and I remember a video of President Hinckley down there looking over one of our meeting houses. I believe there was water all over the floor in one of the rooms in the meeting houses. And President Hinckley looked around, grabbed a mop and started to clean up. That idea of being a servant of all. He's one of us. This is my church too. We're all in this together, and give me a mop. So great just to see that. Does that ring a bell with you guys?
- Hank Smith: 29:37 Yeah, I absolutely remember that. I remember the picture.
- John Bytheway: 29:40 Yeah. President Nelson feels the same way. I've heard him say this a number of times in General Conference. This is October of '21. "My dear brothers and sisters, welcome to General Conference. What a joy it is to be with you. You have been on my mind almost constantly the last six months. I have prayed about you and for you. I love you dear brothers and sisters. The Lord knows you and loves you." I think you've got the same love

for the saints as you see here with Paul and the Thessalonian saints. You can feel it in his words, how much he appreciates them and their faith.

Professor Dale Sturm: 30:16

And I think you sense the sincerity of it. This is not a tactic, it's not a rhetorical device. He actually feels it. I remember, similar to what you brethren just described, years ago at a meeting in Burley, Idaho, like a priesthood leadership conference, but that's anachronistic. It was before there were such things as. But it was bishops, and stake presidents, and stake presidencies, and elders presidencies gathered in a chapel in Burley Idaho, and it was the middle of the summer, I recall. Of course, the big industry in the area is agriculture, the farmers are busy. And to come on a Saturday afternoon, they've set aside their work. They've made a bit of a sacrifice. And so you have this room full of these priesthood leaders. They're sunburned.

30:59

And President Packer came to speak, and he walked into the room and got on the rostrum and turned and looked and he just stopped. He didn't proceed to a seat, he just stopped and got emotional. A man raised in a farming community, and knew what the sacrifice was for these men to be here, and the place was jam packed. People who'd come to hear, get instruction from an apostle. He felt it, and he couldn't contain the emotion of his love for the saints.

31:31

Yeah, it's real and it's sweet and you feel it here from Paul. This is not just rhetoric. He loves these people. He was their missionary, and maybe many can relate to that. The way you feel about the struggles of the people that you prayed with, and worried with, and helped them move forward, and helped them overcome challenges. Clearly Paul feels it.

31:52

In fact, he's about to give one of the greatest expressions of it in any of his letters. He notes that we brought you the gospel, you felt the Holy Ghost. You had the assurance of the Holy Ghost. There's a couple of phrases in verse six I love, "You became followers of us and of the Lord having received the word," note this, "... in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost." Kind of an interesting paradox. You received it with much affliction and joy simultaneously, somehow mashed together. There was the struggle and the joy at the same time. So much so that you were ensamples or examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia, that is our work in other parts of that province was blessed because of the way you received the gospel. And then this, verse six, "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God word is spread abroad."

- 32:54 That phrase, from you sounded out the word of the Lord, some translations use, I think a better English phrase, that from you rang out the word of the Lord. I don't know something about that I like. Like a bell that you can hear all over the place, and if you're right next to it, is deafening.
- 33:12 Now we're not talking about them sending missionaries, we're just talking about the way they've accepted the gospel, and how they're striving to be faithful to it in a complicated circumstance. And then the end of verse eight, your behavior, your acceptance is sounded out so thoroughly so that we need not to speak anything. We don't have to tell anybody about it. In fact, verse nine, "For they themselves," these other people who have heard of you, "...show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you." That is, we go other places and we hear stories about our experiences with you because it's been spread around. People are so excited about the way you've come to Christ, and how you turned to God from idols.
- 33:56 And then an interesting repetition, to serve the living and true God. That is, you have turned away from emperor worship, at perhaps real cost socially, maybe even financially, to serve the true and living God. And you've turned to God from idols. And then to serve the living God, not just philosophically, or in terms of your doctrine, but you start to serve the true and the living God, and to wait. I love that. How did they turn to God? They did it to serve and to wait. They're actively engaged in living the gospel, but they're also waiting with patience for His son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. They're faithfully looking forward to the day when the worldly problems will be solved, and they'll be at rest from them. That's one of the most remarkable sets of compliments that I think Paul gives anywhere in his letters.
- John Bytheway: 35:00 Sometimes we hear from folks that are listeners, we are just amazed at what people are going through, but they're faithful. When I saw verse six, I underlined it before we started today. "Received the word in much affliction." And right at two words after affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. And I marvel what people go through but keep coming back to God even in the midst of that. I think the Thessalonians are going through that. Paul mentions it, but that is, it's not a one-time event. That's a lot of people right now that receive the word with much affliction, wouldn't you say?
- Professor Dale Sturm: 35:39 Yeah.

Hank Smith:	35:40	Dale, you just experienced this as a mission leader. Joining this church is not a easy thing for a lot of people. It often means cutting old ties, friendships.
John Bytheway:	35:53	Whole new life.
Hank Smith:	35:54	Yeah, it's a whole new life and sometimes, we as members, maybe we've never been there, so we don't know what it's like to be a new member of the church, but Paul does. I think Paul knows what it's like to convert and lose friends over it, so maybe he appreciates it a little bit more, but it's almost got to be like going into a foreign country joining this church. There's new lingo, there's new meetings you have to attend. Everything is different. It seems like Paul understands that.
Professor Dale Sturm:	36:20	I think that's absolutely true. Paul clearly understands it. Where's the place where he calls himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews? Where he says, "I was a super Jew. I had a lot of status."
John Bytheway:	36:32	I was a Pharisee.
Professor Dale Sturm:	36:33	Right. But I had to turn away from all of that. And these people similarly, I think they're a great model for what it's like today, when people come into the church. That it's not just learning our ways, and our language, and our patterns, but it's also being cut off from everything that had been your comfort zones, the way you knew things worked. And Thessalonica is going to be a good example of that. If they're not going to be willing to offer a pinch of incense, then they can't even go to social events. If they're not participating in offering sacrifices at the temple to Caesar, they're probably kicked out of the guilds. Their business associates won't deal with them anymore. I mean, everything changes. Very, very challenging in much affliction, but with joy, how do you do that? How do people do it? How do you live through affliction with joy? Any thoughts on it?
John Bytheway:	37:34	Let me ask you a question, Dale, while we're thinking of your question. As a mission leader, what would you say to members when new converts would come in?
Professor Dale Sturm:	37:45	Really sweet question. It's such an important, and not just new members, but returning members. There's some similar application here. It's essential that we receive them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We have to bring them into the fold. They have to become part of us. We got to be deliberate and intentional about it. So, here's a President Hinckley story for

you, but one that's maybe a great example of this, and it's really simple, every one of us could do this.

38:16 I have a friend from my hometown, Thousand Oaks, California, and he was serving as a ward mission leader. They were teaching someone, things were going well. This woman and her family decided to go travel to Salt Lake City, see Temple Square. And they attend a sacrament meeting in the Joseph Smith Memorial building, and it happens to be the ward that President Hinckley attended. He was rarely there, but on this particular Sunday he was. And he came in after everyone was seated, and the congregation stood as he came in. And he was coming down the aisle, and he saw this woman and her family, and he immediately walked over to her and said, "I don't know you. My name's Gordon Hinckley." And put out his hand, what a sweet...

39:01 She had no idea what was happening. This remarkable moment. This was just a pleasant member of the church who was reaching out. Perhaps even a little awkwardly, because the whole congregation is standing watching this. But boy, it's so simple to do that, particularly when you see they're with the missionaries. But they don't have to be with the missionaries for us to say to them, "I don't think I know you. My name's Dale." Just such a simple thing.

39:29 We found, in the mission field, that we keep track of a lot of statistics, a lot of numbers. They're called key indicators, but one of the key indicators we found to be the most indicative, the most indicatory of the key indicators was, are they coming to church? Because if they're coming to church, they get to be around the saints. They hear inspired talks, and hear inspired music. And being among the saints makes a big difference. And as saints, we have to reach out.

40:03 Now with returning members, there's maybe one thing that's worth noting. For some reason, coming back, if you've been and stepped away, looms really large for them. It's just hard. My father was out of the church for years, and I remember towards the end of his life he called me and he said, "I want to go back to church, but I don't know how to do it." And it seemed pretty obvious to me.

John Bytheway: 40:25 Yeah, you just drive over.

Professor Dale Sturm: 40:27 You drive over to the church, and go in and sit down and that's it, you're back. But he was afraid of, people would say things like, "What are you doing here?" Or, "Oh, hold up the walls.

There's going to be an earthquake, because Art Sturm is back in the church."

- 40:42 Things that maybe we think are funny, and even collegial, are actually the very things they're afraid of. Maybe the best we can do to returning members and people that the missionaries bring or new members is, boy, I'm glad you're here. It's good to see you. Tell them your name. Remind them of your name. I think that's what people need. Then they feel like, okay, I have a spiritual home here. And until somebody feels that, they're not going to take the next step, because imagine everything they're leaving. They need to feel at home.
- John Bytheway: 41:15 What a cool thing for Paul to be able to say, I know where you're coming from. Believe me, I gave up a lot to join.
- Hank Smith: 41:22 I like what Dale said about gathering, because we find out that we're in the same boat. And I love to call it same boat therapy, that wow, we've got problems too. You've got problems too, but let's go through this together. And COVID was tough, because we weren't gathering. I just remember how nice it was to go back to the chapel when we were able to gather again. And to see everybody, and to hear what they're all going through was... Really gave a testimony to me of the idea of gathering and how important that is.
- John Bytheway: 41:49 Dale, we're having a fantastic time here and we're through one chapter of First Thessalonians, so let's keep going here. What are we going to see next?
- Professor Dale Sturm: 41:57 Chapter two is really sort of an interesting moment, where Paul is reminding them of the time that they spent together. About how he and Silas and Timothy worked among them and lived among them, and there's a couple of themes that he points out. And I actually think this is a pretty good model for how to share the gospel. How to be a disciple of Christ, who sets an example that others might be drawn to. He's going to comment first of all in verse two. He's going to note that, even after we had suffered before and were shamefully entreated, as you know at Philippi, so he's reminding them of, you know what happened to us at Philippi.
- John Bytheway: 42:37 Yeah.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 42:38 We got arrested, we got beaten, we got put in jail. Interestingly, Paul kept that ace card in his pocket, that, by the way, we're Romans, until the next morning. So, it kind of seems like he

courted some of that, because Paul's always thinking about how are we going to spread the gospel? But he notes, things were pretty tough in Philippi, but then we came to you and we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

43:05

That English phrase sounds like Paul is saying, we were contentious when we came among you, but it actually means in the face of difficulty. We preached to you in the face of conflict and challenge. He's talking about how bold they were. And then maybe jump to verse 11, a similar theme. "As you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father doth his children." They had a relationship with these people that allowed them to speak boldly and in a straightforward way. Kindly, but they would exhort them and charge them, the way a father does to their child. Like that tough coach you had in high school, who would sometimes give it to you straight, and Paul's saying, that's how we were among you. He also notes back in verse three, that when we were among you, it was, our exhortation was not of deceit nor of uncleanness, nor in guile, that we weren't playing any tricks. We weren't trying to use any rhetorical devices. We were really straightforward.

Hank Smith:

44:08

They're saying we didn't manipulate. We just taught the truth as we know it.

Professor Dale Sturm: 44:12

Yeah. And we weren't trying to teach you the things that would please men, things that we thought you might want to hear. We taught things that were pleasing to God. And he kind of continues with that theme. We didn't use flattering words nor did we have, the King James text says, "cloak of covetousness." The Greek there means a pretext for greed. That is, we weren't among you trying to get anything from you. He'll also note by the way, that he worked for his own living when he was there. He didn't ask for any money. He didn't ask for endless dinner appointments. We worked. In fact, in verse nine, he says, "We labored night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you." We didn't want you to feel like you had to support us or to be misunderstood, that we were just here like some of the teachers of the day, to get hired, to become your favorite teacher that you would pay us to, you know.

John Bytheway:

45:05

Yeah. And to get fed and right to-

Professor Dale Sturm: 45:07

Yeah. He's reminding them that you saw that that's not how things worked among us, and that we weren't burdensome. This is an interesting phrase, verse six, "Nor have men sought we

glory, neither of you nor yet of others when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ." That is, we could have maybe pulled rank, and noted who we are, and demanded that you provide for us, but Apostles don't do that. Paul is noting that we didn't pull rank, we were there as brothers. And then verse eight, "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear unto us."

45:50 We'd have done anything for you, and you know that from the people that you've ministered to through your life, and maybe people you remember from when you were a young missionary. I saw it with our missionaries. They would do anything for those people. Their hearts just went out to them, and Paul's reminding them of that. We were yours 100% when we just really loved you. I think all of that, there's probably some pretty useful models for, how do we live in the world as Christians and how do we share the gospel? We're bold. We're full of love and affection and a desire to serve, but we're also careful not to allow our message to drift towards things that men want to hear. We're true to what God would have us speak. Those are all pretty good instructions for sharing the gospel in the real world.

Hank Smith: 46:42 Dale, John, as we've been talking about Paul and the Thessalonians, and this love missionaries have for the people. You might remember this story of Joseph F. Smith, the son of Hyrum Smith. He was called on a mission to Hawaii at, I think he was 15.

John Bytheway: 46:59 15 years old.

Hank Smith: 47:01 15 years old.

John Bytheway: 47:02 It was a Teacher's Quorum. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 47:04 Yeah. I think he had some trouble at school and Brigham Young said that, "He's got a lot of energy. It could be used in missionary work." So, while he's in Hawaii, get this you guys, he is 16 years old, and he's assigned to preside over the Church on Maui. At 16 years old.

47:24 In April of 1856, Joseph was transferred to the big island of Hawaii, and assigned to preside over the Hilo Conference. And this is just amazing to me that this is all happening as a teenager, not that this has a lot to do with why I'm telling this story. While serving there, he became desperately ill, had a

fever that lasted for nearly three months. And he was taken under the care of a young Hawaiian couple, which took him to their home, and did all they possibly could to help him recover. That was 1856. And then, Joseph F. Smith returns to Hawaii, and he's now President of the Church. This is what happens. This devoted sister and the young missionaries she cared for were reunited on a pier in Honolulu. She called out for Iosepa, Joseph, and he instantly ran to her, hugging her and saying, "Mama, mama, my dear old mama." The boy she had cared for was now the Prophet of the Church, Joseph F. Smith. And the caring sister, now blind and frail, had bought him the best gift she could afford, A few choice bananas.

48:33 Three months later, in the October 1915 General Conference, President Joseph F. Smith proposed the construction of a temple in Hawaii. Although construction advanced promptly, sadly, Joseph F. Smith did not live to see the Hawaii temple completed, but Ma did. In her 90s, among the first to attend, Ma was carried through the temple to receive her blessings and be sealed to her husband. While in the temple, she heard the words of Joseph F. Smith tell her, "Aloha.", and a dove flew in through an open window and lighted on her bench. Ma passed away a week later, buried near the temple. And a statue of her now resides to the temple in honor of her and so many like her who laid the foundation for a temple in Hawaii. So, Dale, John, sorry to go off-topic there, but it seems kind of apropos for the story of a missionary connecting with a people.

Professor Dale Sturm: 49:26 Absolutely. And Paul says, "We gave you our own souls." I think anyone who's ministered and served gets it in some way or another, and that's a very appropriate example of it.

John Bytheway: 49:40 Also our own souls. That's a beautiful phrase.

Professor Dale Sturm: 49:43 So maybe just two more things in chapter two before we leave it. Verse 14, "For ye brethren became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus." That is, you've been on a path that's kind of similar to what the earliest churches, the ones that we started in and around Jerusalem have gone through, and here's how, "For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God and are contrary to all men."

50:20 He's noting that you've had a similar path, you've had some persecution, and then reminds them, it got so bad, you'll recall, that I got chased out, and that ended our time together. Verse

17, "But we brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face." You quoted President Nelson saying that he prays about us and for us all the time. This is Paul saying, "I'm not there physically, but you are in my heart." And I get it, you get it. I pray for my returned missionaries in every prayer. Every prayer we say, my wife and I, we pray for them. And for the current mission president, by the way, for maybe different reasons, but we're not there, but we were there in our heart.

John Bytheway: 51:07

A piece of my heart is still there with you. Yeah.

Professor Dale Sturm: 51:09

Yeah. And maybe you feel that way about your field of labor, or places you've lived, that even in the challenges melt away. Here's something we noted about missionaries who are about to return. In the final 24 hours of being in the field, they all get really emotional and mushy. And every hard thing, everything that they wrote to me in a letter telling me how much they hated and how hard it was, it just melts away and they forget. And now, all they can remember is this great experience and that great experience, and this wonderful relationship, and it's kind of interesting. Maybe a little bit what a woman experiences after childbirth, where the pain melts away a little bit and you're just left with the joy, so Paul's noting that.

51:54

And then just one more thing, verse 18, "Wherefore we would've come unto you, even I, Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us." I wanted to come back. I wanted to get back there. As far as we know, he never goes back to Thessalonica. Here he's saying, "I wanted to get back." And then in chapter three he's going to note, "But we sent Timothy to go and be with you and confirm you and encourage you. And you love Timothy, so it's good you got to see him."

Hank Smith: 52:20

This is a Paul that I have not seen before.

Professor Dale Sturm: 52:24

Yeah, a tender.

Hank Smith: 52:25

Yeah. Usually by this point, he's giving some correction. Something that they're doing wrong.

John Bytheway: 52:30

Yeah.

Hank Smith: 52:30

Something that they need to fix.

John Bytheway: 52:30

Yeah.

Hank Smith:	52:32	But yeah, he's really tender here.
Professor Dale Sturm:	52:33	It seems like Paul's personality, based on what we've been told, might've been a little hard, a little strident. But the Paul in Thessalonians is awfully gentle and encouraging.
Hank Smith:	52:46	Yeah. We're two chapters in here, and it's still just gushing with love. He's still just, you can feel him overwhelmed with love for these people.
John Bytheway:	52:56	I think, when you see people that are persevering even in the midst of persecution, that's the feeling it engenders. You just love them. You love that their testimony is carrying them through, and I guess that's what Paul's doing here.
Hank Smith:	53:12	It's very similar in the Book of Mormon, isn't it, John? To Alma meeting the sons of Mosiah again and he says-
John Bytheway:	53:17	They were still his brethren in the Lord and so excited. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	53:22	It'd been over a decade, right? And they were still going.
John Bytheway:	53:26	I've had that happen, Hank, and so have you. I'm older than you, but I took my son to the dentist, and in walked Elder Comstock. And I hadn't seen him for 30, 40 years and just, how's it going? And kids on missions and everything. And you just, you feel verse 20, "Ye are our glory and joy." You see, that was a Book of Mormon verse came to mind when I saw Elder Comstock. It's so fun to just catch up.
Hank Smith:	53:55	And see that their testimony is still there.
John Bytheway:	53:57	Yep. Still on the covenant path.
Hank Smith:	54:00	All right. Let's keep going, Dale. What does he say next? Is this the whole letter? Is he just saying, "You're wonderful, I just need to write to you."
Professor Dale Sturm:	54:06	For the most part, yeah. It's a lot of praise and encouragement. He's going to correct a doctrinal thing. I think there's a gospel principle that's worth noting that he raises here in chapter three. Having talked about their afflictions, and being honest about the fact that you're being persecuted and your choice to come to Christ has, in many ways, complicated your life in the world. Chapter three verse three, "That no man should be moved by these afflictions for yourselves know that we are appointed thereto." That's kind of a chilling thought, actually.

That difficulty is actually appointed, it's part of the deal. You need to expect it. And then verse four, "For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know." And it makes me think of that spot in Doctrine and Covenant section 58, the revelation that they get on the day that they're establishing that first Sunday in Zion.

- Hank Smith: 55:05 They think this is going to be-
- Professor Dale Sturm: 55:06 Yeah, this is it, man.
- Hank Smith: 55:08 We've made it. Yeah.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 55:10 We've made it. We're actually laying the first logs. The long appointed hour has come, and Zion will be built. And the Lord gives them this sort of chilling, the section 58. Section 58 verse three, "You cannot behold with your natural eyes for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter. And the glory which shall follow after much tribulation, for after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory. The hour is not yet but is nigh at hand. Remember this, which I tell you before, that you may lay it to heart and receive that which is to follow." It's kind of like Paul's saying, "Remember, we told you that difficulty, affliction was part of this path." This shouldn't be new information.
- 56:00 There's promise and glory and blessing, but we got to walk through these thorny parts first. Sitting here in climate controlled comfort with two rock stars, and talking about the sweet joys of the gospel. It's easy to see. Yeah, affliction is part of it.
- John Bytheway: 56:19 Yeah.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 56:19 But you know in the dark of the night, when you're faced with loss, and challenge, or illness, or betrayal, it's hard to remember that this is part of it, but Paul wants them to remember.
- Hank Smith: 56:32 Yeah. As you were talking here Dale, about this difficult path that they prepared them for. I bet both of you remember a BYU devotional called Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence, from Elder Holland. We can link it in our show notes. But he talked about Moses, and how Moses saw the Lord and then the darkness comes. Elder Holland says this, "Moses's message to you today is, don't let your guard down. Don't assume the great

revelation, some marvelous illuminating moment, the opening of an inspired path is the end of it. Remember, it's not over until it's over."

- 57:09 He goes on a little bit later to say, "I wish to encourage every one of us regarding the opposition that so often comes after enlightened decisions have been made. After moments of revelation and conviction have given us peace and assurance we thought we would never lose." Elder Holland then goes on to talk about what Paul says to people in this, what Elder Holland says, "A good and winning fight, but a fight nevertheless." Paul says to those who thought a new testimony, or a personal conversion, or a spiritual experience, would put them beyond trouble. He says, "Call to remembrance the former days. After you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions. Cast not away therefore, your confidence."
- 57:50 This is Elder Holland again. "That is to say, sure, it is tough before you join the church while you're trying to join and after you have joined." "That's the way it's always been.", Paul says. "But don't draw back. Don't panic and retreat. Don't lose your confidence. Don't forget how you once felt. Don't distrust the experience that you had." This whole talk is just fantastic.
- 58:11 I'll give you one more paragraph from it here. He talks about the children of Israel being led out of Egypt to a goodly land. He applies that to today. He says, "What goodly land? Your goodly land. Your Promised Land, your New Jerusalem. Your own little acre flowing with milk and honey, your future, your dreams, your destiny. I believe that in our own individual ways, God takes us to the grove, or to the mountain, or the temple, and there shows us the wonder of his plan for us. We might not see it as fully as Moses or Nephi or the brother of Jared, but we see it as much as we need to see in order to know the Lord's will for us and to know he loves us beyond mortal comprehension.
- 58:49 "I also believe that the adversary and his pinched calculating little minions try to oppose such experiences, and then darken them after they happen. But that is not the way of the gospel. That is not the way of the Latter-day Saint who claims as the fundamental fact of the restoration, the spirit of revelation." And then this beautiful statement. "Fighting through darkness and despair and pleading for the light is what opened this dispensation. It is what keeps it going, and it is what will keep you going. With Paul, I say cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense for reward." Do you both remember that talk?

Professor Dale Sturm:	59:26	Oh, yes. Thank you for reading that, that soaring language from Elder Holland. You just, you feel like, okay, give me some adversity. Give me this mountain.
John Bytheway:	59:35	I can take this on.
Professor Dale Sturm:	59:36	Wow.
John Bytheway:	59:37	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	59:40	Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Professor Dale Sturm, 1 and 2 Thessalonians. I feel like sometimes it's pretty easy to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sitting in the chapel, but then we got to go to work and then we're out on the freeway and then we're out and-
- Hank Smith: 00:19 Facing, difficulty, facing opposition.
- John Bytheway: 00:22 Keep coming back because that's where we get our strength.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 00:25 Yeah. Elder Maxwell would quote this idea that the cross comes before the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning that, with all of the glories of the gospel, we also have to deal with the fact that tomorrow's Monday and we got to be faithful tomorrow in the ordinary things, in the persistence of regular stuff. It's easy to be a faithful Latter-day Saint sitting in the chapel hearing a wonderful talk or conference time, hearing the soaring language of an apostle, but tomorrow's a Monday morning and we got to go to work and we got to deal with neighbors and traffic. And then sometimes the affliction of Christianity is just found in the ordinariness of the day to day that it just keeps coming, the relentless regularity of life.
- Hank Smith: 01:10 Yeah, the relentless regularity. I like that. It reminds me of chapter three, verse 12, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men." That sounds like a day-to-day useful verse. Dale, let's keep going here. What else does Paul have to say in this first letter?
- Professor Dale Sturm: 01:28 Chapter four is where we do get some doctrinal things. So having noted that, "You are in the covenant Thessalonians and we love you. You're an example to everyone. You're doing great." He now says, "But I want to invite you to even be better, to continue on this path. Don't just sit where you are." So, in verse one, "Furthermore than we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that is as you have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more." This is the endure to the end part, but not just in place. This is an invitation to growth.

- 02:08 So he introduces a very significant doctrinal idea, verse three, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification," and in fact, in the next three or four verses, he's going to use that word repeatedly. "We're inviting you to pursue sanctification." Verse four, "Every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." Verse seven, "God has not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness," and the Greek word is *hagiamos*. It's the same word that was used in three and four for sanctification. Across these few verses, Paul is saying, "You're doing great, but we need to invite you to pursue sanctification." This is an interesting idea that we come to Christ, we receive the ordinances, we enter into the covenant and thereby we are justified. And Paul teaches this.
- 03:01 Probably, the Book of Mormon is the only place that's taught better than Paul teaching it that our justification is where we're forgiven, we're declared clean, where the slate is wiped clean, where we're put back at the zero sin line, that we're relabeled as righteous, even though we aren't. But sanctification is beyond that. Sanctification is where we not only get forgiven for when we didn't do as we knew we ought to, it's where we're enabled to actually live like Christ, not just get forgiven for when I wasn't like Christ, that that's what Paul's inviting them to. There's a couple of definitions in the guide to the scriptures that I really love that they're really useful.
- 03:46 The definition of justification in the guide to the scriptures is this, "To be pardoned from punishment for sin and declared guiltless. A person is justified by the Savior's grace through faith in Him." We come to Christ and He covers us. He forgives the transgression. He relabels us. He calls us clean, and if He calls us clean, we're clean. And of course, we know, "I'm not righteous, I'm a mess, but because I've come to Christ, He's reclassifying me. The label He puts on me now is righteous." That's justification, but here's the definition for sanctification, still guide to the scriptures, sanctification. The process of becoming free from sin, pure, clean, holy through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
- 04:35 Now the language is similar and sometimes we imagine becoming free from sin means getting forgiven, but that's not what we're talking about here. That's the justification part. This is where I'm freed from committing sins, not just freed from the consequences of the sins I have committed, that the sanctification process helps me become increasingly like Jesus. Again, not just forgiven for when I wasn't, although that's always available. And I think that's what Paul is inviting them. Remember Elder Maxwell used to talk about it as if it were an

adventure to come out of the foothills and go into the high mountains of seeking to be like Christ, that this is real adventure if you're going to strive to become like Christ. That's what Paul's inviting them to do, "Know how to possess this vessel in sanctification and in honor."

05:27 He talks about behavior. Even sexual sin is one of the things he notes here, but also intent that we got to develop the way we think and what our intents and our motives are. All of that's part of sanctification. So, there's an invitation here for them to step up into the next great challenge of our path and mortality, not just come to Christ but allow Christ to work in us. You remember Elder Bednar talks about this two-pronged effect of the Atonement of Christ, the justification, the forgiveness part, but also the sanctifying part and he does it repeatedly. This is Elder Bednar from way back in October 2007. "It's the Atonement of Jesus Christ that provides both a cleansing and redeeming power that helps us to overcome sin and a sanctifying and strengthening power that helps us to become better than we ever could by relying only upon our own strength." That's the talk where he said the Atonement is for the sinner and the saint, that it forgives us, but it also helps us to be better than we ever could. It seems to be that that's Paul's invitation. That's the next thing to the Thessalonians, "Seek sanctification."

Hank Smith: 06:42 I don't remember who taught me this. Maybe it was last year, John, in the Old Testament, but someone put it together for me of, "Clean hands and a pure heart."

John Bytheway: 06:51 That's exactly what I was thinking of.

Hank Smith: 06:54 Really?

John Bytheway: 06:54 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 06:55 Okay, so I was on the right track, that justification is those clean hands that I'm cleansed and then sanctification is my heart has changed. Does that sound right?

John Bytheway: 07:06 Yeah, and can I tell you my favorite analogy of that is Elder Oaks.

Hank Smith: 07:11 I had the same thing.

John Bytheway: 07:13 About a tree. Do you remember the one?

Hank Smith:	07:15	Yeah, I have it right in front of me. John, we have been doing this too long. The two insights we both had were the exact same thing. Here's what you were thinking of. This is from a talk called Sin and Suffering, BYU Devotional. Elder Oaks talks about what Dale has been teaching us here. He says, "We often think of the results of repentance as simply cleansing us from sin, but that is an incomplete view of the matter. A person who sins is like a tree that bends easily in the wind. On a windy and rainy day, the tree bends so deeply against the ground that the leaves become soiled with mud like sin. If we only focus on cleaning the leaves, the weakness in the tree that allowed it to bend and soil its leaves may remain. Merely cleaning the leaves does not strengthen the tree. Similarly, a person who is merely sorry to be soiled by sin will sin again in the next high wind. The susceptibility to repetition continues until the tree has been strengthened and that's the sanctification part."
	08:17	He goes on to talk about King Benjamin and Alma both speaking of a mighty change of heart. Is that what you're thinking of John?
John Bytheway:	08:24	Yeah, that's exactly the one. In fact, I went on a search to find a weeping willow. I was trying to find a tree that might fit that analogy, something where the leaves would actually get muddy and then you could hose them off, but next storm you're going to be doing the same thing. So, the sanctification part is losing desire for sin because we talk about a mighty change of heart, but sometimes people get discouraged because they want it to be an instant change of heart and I don't think it's instant. Let me read something from teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. This is on page 51. He said, "The nearer a man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views," and I love this part, "the greater his enjoyments until he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin and like the ancients arrives at a point of faith where he's wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with him. But we consider this is a station to which no man ever arrived in the moment."
	09:23	So it's not an instant change of heart and the process of sanctification is that slowly losing desire for sin. As Dale said, "Justification, we're cleansed. Now we're trying to get to the point where we're losing desire to sin," and it doesn't happen in a moment just like a tree isn't strengthened in a moment. It's got to grow.
Professor Dale Sturm:	09:46	Take a bit. It's always like two steps forward, one step back or two steps forward, three steps back, but that we persist, that

we continue. So, Paul says in 4:7, "For God has not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness," as if he were saying, "Your arrival into the Gospel Covenant is not just about you getting declared clean. It's about changing you. It's about you actually turning into something that you're not yet." It's even hard to imagine how you could possibly get there, but we're going to abound more and more of this call to sanctification.

John Bytheway: 10:25 We've come to Christ in whatever condition we're in as a mess perhaps, but now we're striving to become like Christ. Lifelong process. We got to be patient with ourselves and with each other over that process. We're all messed up here along the covenant path-

Professor Dale Sturm: 10:45 But don't you think that acknowledging that truth, exactly how you just said it, John, makes it much easier to not judge anybody, that anytime the natural man in me feels to pass judgment, I can quickly remind myself that, "You're a mess yourself. You got your own stuff and the Lord's helping you along the way just like he's helping them along. We're all in this together. The process is one that we share and we really need to encourage one another in it, abound in love one to another"?

John Bytheway: 11:13 What was President Uchtdorf's talk?

Professor Dale Sturm: 11:16 The bumper sticker?

John Bytheway: 11:17 Yeah, the bumper sticker, "Don't judge me because I sin differently than you do."

Hank Smith: 11:23 So that verse seven becomes pretty crucial because you would think God has called us to uncleanness, to clean us up, but he's saying no, there's more than that. It's holiness he wants. Yes, you can be justified and declared clean, but man, we want to become something even more.

John Bytheway: 11:42 We want to be new creatures. That's a very Paul way to say it and, Hank, you read a few weeks ago, I think, the C.S. Lewis thing about he's not just coming in to do a little bit of remodeling, but he's going to take out a couple of wings and add a new patio and all sorts of stuff, right?

Hank Smith: 11:58 Yeah, it's not a little cottage he wants. He wants a mansion.

Professor Dale Sturm: 12:01 It can be very surprising what he puts us through in order to change us because he has a plan that sometimes we don't see and becoming like him is a stretch. It's going to stretch us. Just

to finish out chapter four, he does a little more encouraging, so he switches topics, verse 13. This might be something that maybe Timothy brought back to him that they're saying this in Thessalonica, they're concerned about this. And so, Paul seems to address a specific thing. Verse 13, "I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, those that have already died, that you sorrow not even as others which have no hope. Don't be like the world who's awash in sorrow at the loss of loved ones." 14, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again," this thing where I've been preaching to you and you have a witness of, you know that it's true, Jesus died and rose again. If you believe that "even so them also, which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

13:02 This is Paul encouraging them by reminding them of the remarkable hope that's in the doctrine of the resurrection. It's just such a practical hope to know that those that we've loved will be with us again and we'll be together with them in the Lord. And here Paul even connects it to the coming of Christ, which they probably thought was going to happen sooner rather than later. My sense is that the early Christian expectation, so it's not going to be that far away.

John Bytheway: 13:35 Just around the corner, right?

Hank Smith: 13:36 Yeah.

Professor Dale Sturm: 13:37 Yeah, don't you imagine that if John knew it was going to be 2000 years, he would've asked for something different. They think-

John Bytheway: 13:46 That's really good.

Professor Dale Sturm: 13:49 They thought it was going to happen pretty quick. So, Paul is noting, "When He comes, our beloved dead are going to rise with Him and we'll be caught up to meet them." I don't think this is a really technical exposition on the Resurrection. Rather it's a reminding of them of the doctrine of resurrection in order to give them hope, help them to be cheered in their hearts, that remember one of the glories of your belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is you get to have hope of a resurrection, a hope that we'll be with our loved ones. Kind of the tone of the whole ... it's still there. Even in a doctrinal place, Paul is using it as encouragement.

John Bytheway: 14:27 This idea in verse 17, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord

in the air". In the Religion 211, 212 in the New Testament Student Manual, the Institute Manual, which everybody has on their phone, whether they know it or not, Library, Adults, Young Adults, Institute Manuals, you can read this, the Joseph Smith Translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 reads, "Then they who are alive shall be caught up together into the clouds with them who remain to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we be ever with the Lord." "Many Christians," the manual continues, "use the word rapture from a Latin term, meaning caught up, when referring to the time, when the righteous will be caught up to meet the Savior at His coming."

15:19 Have you heard of those movies called Left Behind? There's these different ideas that our Christian friends have about the Rapture and I remember I ran into one of our colleagues, Brother Tom Wayment, and I said, "What's our feeling about the Rapture?" And he in one sentence blessed my life. He said, "We believe in a post-tribulation Rapture. They believe in a pre-tribulation Rapture." And it's like, "Oh, so we're going to be here for all the tribulation stuff. We're going to go through that before this caught up to meet him in the air thing." Does that sound right to you, Dale?

Professor Dale Sturm: 15:59 Yes. Before the thousand-year party, we're going to have to go through some challenging things. I was driving on the freeway and there was a van in front of me that had a bumper sticker that said, "In case of Rapture, this car will be unmanned," and I thought, "Oh, that's useful. Thank you for the warning." In some Christianity that it could happen at any minute and others won't know that it's happened, that life will go on. That's clearly not what the scriptures teach, particularly the scriptures of the Restoration, that we're all going to know what's going on.

John Bytheway: 16:35 Right.

Professor Dale Sturm: 16:35 It will be a dramatic undeniable event ...

John Bytheway: 16:38 Right.

Professor Dale Sturm: 16:39 An event that for some will be frightening, but just imagine the joy of the coming of the Lord coupled with the resurrection of grandma and grandpa and mom and dad and maybe a lost child and what a moment of encouragement to stay true for, so you can be there for that day.

John Bytheway: 16:58 That's coming in 2 Thessalonians, more about the Second Coming. Like you said, he's talking about resurrection here, but

he hooks it to when the Lord comes and we'll be caught up in the air to meet Him. And I've just had a lot of students that have asked about that Rapture thing because that's talked about a lot in some circles. In one of those movies, both of the pilots disappear from the front end of a 757 and that could be alarming. We're going to be here through those tribulations, which is nice to know because, in a way, it builds our testimony to see the trials and the persecution and to be able to go, Yup, this is what was supposed to happen. Yup, we're going to be here for it, but all this means there's something wonderful coming.

Professor Dale Sturm: 17:46

And then Paul's final words there, "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." When someone's heartbroken about loss, remind them of the Resurrection. We can encourage one another by teaching doctrine.

John Bytheway: 18:00

Isn't that a great last phrase? That's General Conference. That's the scriptures, "Comfort one another with these words." That's really good. Something really cool about the word comfort. I looked up the etymology, not to be confused with entomology, which is the study of insects, but I looked up the etymology of the word comfort and it means, I love this, together strong. The Latin com like companion and fort, fortis, like a fort. The comforter means together strong.

Hank Smith: 18:34

It seems that Joseph Smith read a lot of Paul because you see it showing up in everything that he taught. At a funeral, he said, "We mourn the loss, but we do not mourn as those without hope." Right there, that phrase 1 Thessalonians 4, "You sorrow not even as others which have no hope." We still sorrow, but the sorrow is mitigated somewhat by our knowledge. Don't you both think that? John, I know you've lost your parents, Dale, I'm sure you've lost people close to you, that there is something mitigating about the doctrines of the Gospel? President Nelson once said, "Our limited perspective would be enlarged if we could witness the reunion on the other side of the veil, when the doors of death open to those returning home."

19:25

Joseph Smith taught this is at the King Follett funeral, "Our relatives and friends are only separated from their bodies for a short season. Their spirits which existed with God have left the tabernacle of clay only for a little moment as it were. And they now exist in a place where they converse together, the same as we do on Earth. The expectation, " he says, "of seeing my friends in the morning of the resurrection cheers my soul and makes me bear up against the evils of life." And if you guys don't mind one more, John Taylor, "While we are mourning the

loss of our friends, others are rejoicing to meet them behind the veil." We could go on and on about these doctrines that mitigate the sorrow.

- John Bytheway: 20:06 Hank, I've always loved that idea, "We shall have them again." The gospel gives us an anticipation that is so wonderful. I have a picture of my mom sitting right here on my desk that we lost in December of 2020 and there's just this expectation. We know we'll have them again and it's almost a knowledge that, "Oh yeah, they're there," that they're probably watching and facepalming sometimes, but there's an anticipation that is really something to look forward to. I'm glad you mentioned that, Hank, and you've lost people too, I know.
- Hank Smith: 20:41 Yeah. And it's not that we don't sorrow. I don't want to-
- John Bytheway: 20:44 We're supposed to sorrow. We're going to mourn.
- Hank Smith: 20:46 Yeah. What do you think about that? Have you found that to be true in your life?
- Professor Dale Sturm: 20:50 Yeah, absolutely. I love what you just shared, Hank, and it reminds me that sometimes we take comfort from knowing that we will see them again. Both of my parents are gone, all of my grandparents are gone. The Gospel doctrine that we will see them again is very comforting, but that reminder that they're having a reunion with those that they lost and for years of their life felt that hole in their heart. They knew the truth and had hope in the truth, but there was still a hole. And then when they pass over, the hole is filled and my mom got to be with her dad again who she missed so desperately in the last 20 years of her life. And what an encouraging doctrine.
- Hank Smith: 21:33 I think there's something beautiful there about the reunions that happen on the other side and maybe Paul is saying that's why we do not mourn as those which have no hope.
- John Bytheway: 21:43 So what have we got in chapter five that we should notice?
- Professor Dale Sturm: 21:46 First of all, let's note that Paul still seems to be responding to something that has been raised by the Thessalonians. Again, we can only imagine that it's something that Timothy brought back, so he says, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you." I'm not going to engage in a lengthy discourse about the signs of the Second Coming. Why? "For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." We're not going to try and

pinpoint it. I'm not going to try and give you any sort of formula to figure out. The thing you got to know is that it's going to happen, so we have an expectation, but in terms of nailing it down, that's a fruitless exercise. Instead, just prepare for it and then it also takes a little shot at the Roman worldview and one that may have made non-Christians in Thessalonica concerned about the Christians.

22:47 This is verse three, "For when they," we don't know who they is, "when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child." But that phrase, peace and safety, that was the Roman motto of the Pax Romana, of the Roman peace. This is the emperor saying, "I have given peace and safe ... You live in a time and a place of peace and safety." The Thessalonians, particularly as they sit astride the great Via Egnatia, this speedway that was both comfortable to travel and safe to travel on, "I've provided peace and safety." Paul's purposely, I think, because you don't see this language anywhere else in Paul, he doesn't refer to peace and safety anywhere else. I think he's quoting the Roman establishment and noting that, "You live in a time when they claim there's peace and safety. This is exactly the time when we need to be watching."

23:45 It's not a conversation about the signs as much as, "It is going to happen and you've got to pay attention." Well, the world treats it as silly, note this from President Oaks, "Four matters are indisputable to Latter-day Saints." This is from April Conference 2004, "Four indisputable matters for latter days. One, the Savior will return to the Earth in power and great glory to reign personally during a millennium of righteousness and peace. This is going to happen. It is certain. Jesus Christ is personally coming back to the Earth. It's not a figure of speech, it's not metaphor. It's certainly not hyperbole. He is coming back. Number two, at the time of His coming, there'll be a destruction of the wicked and a resurrection of the righteous. There will be judgment. Three, no one knows the time of His coming."

24:35 And he leaves that in that stark simplicity. No elaboration, just an apostolic assertion, "Nobody knows when it's going to happen," which should ring in our ears the next conversation where somebody's trying to pinpoint it for us or some group that believes they've got it pinpointed. "And then finally, the faithful are taught to study the signs of it and to be prepared for it." I think that's what Paul's getting at here, we're not going to waste a lot of time on the signs, but He is coming back and you got to get ready for it. You got to prepare for His return. Verse

six, "Therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober."

- Hank Smith: 25:14 I think that was the same talk where Elder Oaks said something like, "A 72-hour kit of temporal supplies is good, but a 24-hour kit of spiritual preparation is more enduring."
- John Bytheway: 25:25 That's awesome. I have a theory about this I want to run by you guys because I think there's two metaphors here. One of them is the thief in the night, but the other is a woman in travail in verse three. And I feel like, for the wicked, it comes as a thief in the night. I noticed footnote 2B takes you to section 106, verse four where it says, "And again, verily I say unto you, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh and it overtaketh the world as a thief in the night." But what if for us who are studying the signs of the times, it's more like a woman in travail. She has a pretty good idea of when she's going to go into labor, of how long it's been, and if we know what the signs are, it won't overcome us as a thief in the night. It will be more like, "Yup, that was supposed to happen. Yup, that's supposed to happen." It's more like a woman in travail.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 26:19 Yeah, I like that. I love that. I like that a lot. Particularly because the woman in travail knows it's going to happen. It is inevitable. There's no, "Maybe it's not going to happen." It is going to happen. Wisdom requires that you prepare. You can't just ignore it. It is going to happen.
- John Bytheway: 26:37 Yeah, I think he's telling us, well, but you're the children of light. It won't overcome you because you are the children of light, in verse five, "so let us not sleep, but let's watch for the signs," and that's the woman in travail thing. So that's just my thought.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 26:53 But you've got to prepare like the expectant woman. So, verse eight, "Let us who are of the day" that is we have knowledge, we can see, we have clarity on this. We'll be sober. Let's put on the breastplate of faith. By the way, clearly the first time he starts to trot out this analogy that he's going to ...
- John Bytheway: 27:11 Ephesians-
- Professor Dale Sturm: 27:11 ... develop in Ephesians. Yeah. Putting on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet, the hope of salvation, the fact that we don't know exactly when it's going to come is not an excuse to do nothing. And as he finishes this, he does hit a few miscellaneous things, some counsel that he gives and all of it is memorable, but extremely well phrased, little great bumper

stickers, things that you could cross stitch onto pillows. But there's one other idea that I think is very rich and applicable to the church in all ages. In verse 11, he says, "Wherefore comfort yourselves together," which with what John shared about the etymology of comfort, that's maybe a more significant phrase than I'd realized, "and edify one another, even as you also." So, to edify is to build up, of course, and then this, "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them, which labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake and be at peace among yourself."

28:17 You have local leaders, people who aren't the apostles, that they're regular people and you live among them, esteem them and love them and be kind to them. In a lay church where we serve one another, it can be easy to be harsh or hard on those who are leading from time to time and I think this is Paul saying, Cut them a break. Those people who are presiding over you, they're doing it because they were asked to. Maybe sometime it'll be you who's asked to. But esteem them and be kind to them. Reminds me of something Elder Christofferson taught in that wonderful talk October 2015, Why the Church? Just a remarkable talk. He notes this, "In the church, we not only learn divine doctrine, we also experience its application."

29:11 So the church is a classroom, but it's also a lab where you got to do the experiments in real time. "As the body of Christ, the members of the church minister to one another in the reality of day-to-day life. All of us are imperfect. We may offend and be offended." And I love the gentleness of this next sentence, "We often test one another with our personal idiosyncrasies." Do you love how gently he puts that? In other words, yeah, there's a lot of weirdos among us. We're all weird and my weirdness tests you.

Hank Smith: 29:44 We get on each other's nerves a little bit. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 29:47 Yeah, and I think he went off script there and then he said, "President Packer called them idiot-syncrasies." Do you remember that?

Professor Dale Sturm: 29:55 Oh yes, yes. "This religion is not concerned only with self," he says, "rather we are all called to serve. We are the eyes, hands, head, feet, and other members of the body of Christ," referring to another Pauline note. "And even those members would seem more feeble are necessary." Just a reminder I think from a couple of apostles, from Paul and from Elder Christofferson, this is also part of how this works, that we got to love and esteem

		one another even when we know each other pretty well and we challenge one another with our idiosyncrasies.
John Bytheway:	30:35	Idiot-syncrasies, right?
Professor Dale Sturm:	30:37	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	30:38	I remember Elder Holland asking about our children. He says, "Do your children know that you love and sustain local and general leaders, imperfect as they are for their willingness to accept a calling they did not seek in order to preserve a standard of righteousness they did not create?"
John Bytheway:	30:57	So good.
Professor Dale Sturm:	30:58	Remarkable.
Hank Smith:	30:58	Give your local leaders a break. I like that, Dale. Maybe did you just have to say that sometimes as a mission leader too, give your mission leaders a break, right? We're trying.
Professor Dale Sturm:	31:08	Certainly, your mission leaders, your young mission leaders, district leaders and zone leaders and senior companions, but also, it's great for young missionaries to see it out in the branches of the church, out in foreign countries or for us in the Midwest where sometimes the branches don't run quite as smoothly as they do in Provo or Rexburg. And they just got to realize these are people who were doing it because they were asked to and they're faithfully trying to maintain a standard that isn't theirs simply because they believe. They're going to try.
Hank Smith:	31:41	"Be patient," Paul says in verse 14, "Be patient."
John Bytheway:	31:45	"Comfort the feeble-minded," see that one was for me, to people, come and find my feeble mind and comfort me, right?
Hank Smith:	31:52	They can come comfort you.
Professor Dale Sturm:	31:53	That's an interesting one, feeble minded, because the actual Greek there, it's not talking about not clear in your thinking. It's talking about being fainthearted, the doubter. We got to comfort the doubter, not dismiss the doubter or shut down the doubter. We got to comfort and support the weak, is another way of saying the same thing and patient toward all.
John Bytheway:	32:13	I like some of these phrases that he closes out with. My friend Kim Peterson, he's been teaching institute in Cedar City forever

and he gave a whole talk on, "Quench not the Spirit," verse 19 once. We almost always use that for being thirsty, to quench your thirst, but this idea of quenching not the spirit. And if you look at the footnote on quench, it says extinguish or hinder or suppress. It reminds me one of my favorite quotations from Elder Bruce R. McConkie, if you have a second, he said, "We come into these congregations and sometimes the speaker brings a jug of living water that has in it many gallons and he pours it out on the congregation and all that the members of the church brought was a single cup." He said, "Or maybe they had their hands over the cups and they didn't get anything to speak of."

33:04 I think maybe quench not the spirit, "No, don't talk about that. I don't want to hear about that," putting your hand over the cup and he went on to say, "Sometimes the speaker just brings a cup and should have prepared better and the people out there have a jug. They want everything you've got." Interesting idea of, "Don't extinguish the spirit."

Hank Smith: 33:25 Dale, we have had a great experience in 1 Thessalonians here. I noticed 2 Thessalonians is a little bit shorter. I imagine it's a follow-up letter. What does Paul teach here?

Professor Dale Sturm: 33:35 You're exactly right. He seems to be following up. We don't know how much time elapses between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. It's believed that he's still at Corinth when he writes this and it seems like it's part of an ongoing conversation. I think he's being responsive to whatever response he got to the first letter. And first of all, in chapter one, more of the Paul of 1 Thessalonians, I love you. You're fantastic. You are such good examples. We're so proud of you. And then chapter two, but I do want to deal with a question that seems to have arisen. Chapter two verse one, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," that is in reference to or about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, I want to talk to you about the Second Coming. "And by our gathering together unto him," so the gathering and the coming of Christ, "that you be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us."

34:33 Joseph Smith Translation actually doesn't change the meaning of any of those, he repositions a phrase. So, in the Joseph Smith Translation, it reads, "That you be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled by letter except you receive it from us." If you get a letter talking about, if it's not from us, if it's not from the recognized authorities, don't be troubled by it and don't be troubled by someone who is claiming to have some special

revelation or that's troubled in spirit or troubled by word, by logos, so somebody making some sort of an argument. They're trying to prove something about the Second Coming from reason. Don't get troubled imagining that the Day of Christ is at hand.

- 35:17 That English gives the impression that Paul's worried that they're going to think it's imminent, but that probably was what everybody thought, that it was imminent. The actual text means, that it's arrived, that it's here, that perhaps it's even coming, you missed it. You and I know that that's not how the Second Coming is going to be. Nobody's going to miss it. But they didn't seem to grasp that. Paul seems to be responding to the possibility that someone has written or preached or taught to these people that the Second Coming's already happened.
- Hank Smith: 35:50 Yeah, Dale, it's pretty clear in the NIV, he says, "Not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by a teaching allegedly from us, prophecy or word of mouth or letter, asserting that the Day of the Lord has already come."
- Professor Dale Sturm: 36:03 Yeah, and I think that's probably a better translation of what the Greek text actually says and what Paul's responding to. It suggests that there might be some misusing the name of Paul or the authorities of the church claiming that they know something that other people don't know because they, "I ran into Paul at a family reunion and he told me this," that kind of thing.
- Hank Smith: 36:27 It sits so close to home from people, "I've got some insider information," right? Oh goodness. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 36:35 People who have left the church over stuff like that, that, "I'm running out ahead of the train," as Elder Pace said, "taking a wrong turn."
- Hank Smith: 36:43 But so-and-so says or this YouTube video, he's got a six-hour ...
- Professor Dale Sturm: 36:47 Right.
- Hank Smith: 36:47 YouTube video on why-
- John Bytheway: 36:48 About the date. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 36:50 Yeah, he knows the day of the Second Coming.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 36:52 I think those are examples of the kind of thing he's talking about.

Hank Smith:	36:56	So Dale, are you saying that people are coming among them and saying, "I know something you don't know. I maybe even know more than Paul about this Second Coming."
Professor Dale Sturm:	37:05	The brethren aren't saying much about this, but this is pretty clear. I think Paul's reacting to that possibility among maybe even some more blatant sorts of things. He assures them in verse three, "Let no man deceive you by any means." Let's just be really clear about this. Don't go down a path where you allow yourself to be deceived, "for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first." There is at least one major and highly recognizable sign that you have to be watching for and we're not there yet, that the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition and then some more description about that being. But the idea here is the thoughts of the world will be enthroned and the simple truth of the Gospel will be lost. There will be a falling away, a turning away."
Hank Smith:	37:57	The thoughts of the world will be enthroned. What an interesting phrase.
Professor Dale Sturm:	38:02	Yeah, and then Paul says, by the way, this is not the first time we've talked about this." Verse five, "Remember you not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things." This is something we've talked about in person. When I was there in that short season before I was running out of town on a rail, we talked about that there will be a falling away. So, we're still in the fight. The game is still underway. There's still time on the clock. So, this is interesting because it's a great example of an apostolic correction. It's a gentle one, keeping with the tone of both of these letters.
	38:37	Again, it's not the tone of 1 Corinthians. There's a, "I praise you not," we don't have that here. I just want to correct you on something and I'm beseeching you to remember that we've already talked about this and so we have to carry on. And maybe there's one more verse in chapter two, verse 15 where he teaches the principle again, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, hold the traditions which you've been taught, whether by word or our epistle." It reminds me of 2 Timothy 3, "knowing that from a child you were taught the holy scriptures." You've been taught this. Cling to what you've been taught. Don't get suckered into other points of view. Look to what we have taught you and what we have written to you to know the truth."
Hank Smith:	39:25	I like that.

John Bytheway:	39:27	That verse 15, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast," I've always loved that word stand. And when we have a standards night, I love to ask the youth, "What's the opposite of stand?" It's shrink, buckle, wilt, compromise. To be a standard-bearer is a strong word, isn't it? Stand fast. I like it.
Hank Smith:	39:49	Don't wilt.
John Bytheway:	39:50	Buckle, shrink, compromise.
Hank Smith:	39:53	So, Dale, that's a mild correction, comparably to the other things we've seen Paul write.
Professor Dale Sturm:	39:59	I agree. Paul is generally mild with the Thessalonians, but I'm also impressed that it's not a place where Paul says, yeah, that's a little thing. I'm just going to let it go. Particularly because there seems to be some who are misusing the name of authority that they're claiming that they've got the inside scoop, they've got the skinny, that they know something nobody else knows and this is a great principle, that unless you hear it from apostolic ministers, you can set it aside.
Hank Smith:	40:29	I remember once as a young seminary teacher hearing that one of President Hinckley's major concerns, which as a young seminary teacher, I hadn't even thought of this, was keeping the doctrine pure. And I thought, "Well, why is that such a priority for him?" He says, "I have spoken before about the importance of keeping the doctrine of the church pure and seeing that it is taught in all of our meetings. I worry about this." He says, "Small aberrations in doctrinal teaching can lead to large and evil falsehoods." So, is that what Paul is seeing here like, this might start small, but it could grow into something that's quite a problem?
Professor Dale Sturm:	41:07	I think certainly this is an example of that. When you think about it, the notion that Christ has already come and we missed it isn't actually that small. That's a great big doctrinal issue for His church. I think, at any rate, that we see Paul reaching to make corrections, offer apostolic realignments that in the absence of apostolic keys, we as humans, we would mess it up so fast. We just get weird really quick. Paul's fighting against that. Let's note this is the earliest or among the earliest letters of Paul, so we're going to see him have to do that a lot.
Hank Smith:	41:45	I'll just throw this in for teachers who are listening and both of you will understand this, having been in church education for so long, to be careful of speculation, misquoting. I've seen that

happen. We get on our own Gospel hobbies, our own topics that you can take off with and say, here's in chapter five, verse six. We can have sensational stories or we too often give our own private interpretations. We should not teach our private interpretation of the Gospel in class. Does that make sense? Do those warnings that sound true to you having been teachers for so long?

Professor Dale Sturm: 42:25

Yes, absolutely.

John Bytheway: 42:27

One of the things that, boy, I learned in my master's program from Robert Millet and Joseph McConkie and Robert J. Matthews, it was so interesting to see how careful they were, how long they would wait to answer a question and to be able to point to an authoritative source. I'd never forgot that. Sometimes I would think, "Oh, I know." But these guys were so slow and careful about what they would say and where they would get their information. That itself was a great lesson.

Hank Smith: 42:54

And as a Gospel teacher, it's okay to say, "I don't know."

John Bytheway: 42:56

"I don't know," and they would do that. They would say, "I don't know."

Hank Smith: 43:00

Dale, how long have you been in church education now? I bet you've seen this a time or two.

Professor Dale Sturm: 43:05

36, going on 37 years, minus three years that we were away.

Hank Smith: 43:11

I don't know if that's happening in Thessalonians, but we can unknowingly teach something that is false.

Professor Dale Sturm: 43:16

Yes, it's possible that this idea was simply a misinterpretation of something Paul had said that since he's talking about the Second Coming and that we'll be able to see our deceased loved ones in the first letter, maybe somehow that got twisted to, "Oh, it's already happened," and as longtime church educators, our safety is in, "Can we find it in the scriptures and can we find multiple prophets and apostles who are teaching?" and I'm thinking of Elder Andersen's ... We call it the Andersen Rule in my classes where he says that, "True doctrine is taught by all 15 members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the 12. True doctrine is taught frequently and by many." If the only place you can show it to me is Orson Hyde, 1855.

John Bytheway: 44:05

Journal of Discourses, yeah.

- Professor Dale Sturm: 44:08 Yeah. Then that doesn't rise to the level of doctrine of the church.
- Hank Smith: 44:11 Doctrine of the church. Yeah, I remember him saying in that talk, "Our doctrine is not difficult to find," over and over and over. Dale, is there anything left in these two letters that we haven't exhausted? I feel like we've really disclosed these two letters and gotten a lot out of them.
- Professor Dale Sturm: 44:28 Maybe one more thing in chapter three that's worth pondering because I think it's an issue we got to grapple with in the modern church as well. In chapter three, he's giving them some counsel about dealing with Christians who have fallen away or who are not walking up to their covenant. They're not doing as well as we would hope that they would do in living the Gospel. I think it's significant what he says here, but I also think we need to take this counsel and supplement it with Paul's counsel in other settings, a little cross-reference. I'm in verse six, chapter three verse six, the very end of 2 Thessalonians, "Now we command you brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us." Don't affiliate and associate with them.
- 45:24 But I'm also thinking of what he says to the Galatians. Can we just compare it for a second and jump over to Galatians chapter six? It's filling the same spot in the letter to the Galatians. It's right at the end and it might have something to do with their varied circumstances. To the Thessalonians, he says, "Withdraw yourself" from someone who's not being orderly. To the Galatians, this is chapter six, verse one, he says, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness," and then a little warning, "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Go after them. Go find them. Be a little careful about where you go. Watch yourself, that, don't allow your position to drift in order to make theirs more palatable, but go get them.
- 46:13 To the Thessalonians, he says, "Withdraw," but maybe softens it a little bit back in 2 Thessalonians chapter three, verse 13 through 15, really the final moments, "But you, brethren, be not weary in well-doing." It can be tiresome to always try to make good choices, that's built in there, but I think he's specifically talking about towards each other, do good to one another and don't get tired. Hang in there. Don't be weary, verse 14, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him that he may be ashamed." So, there is this sense of we should use our influence in order to help

people make good choices, but verse 15, "Yet, count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Don't reclassify him as on the outside, apostate enemy. Think of the way you would reclaim a brother, the way you want to help somebody that you love.

47:14 I think that we are required to, as a body, as the body of Christ, maintain standards and sometimes it will be uncomfortable for people to hear the standards that we maintain and proclaim, but also as a body of Christ, we have to be loving and kind and forgiving. Otherwise, we lose the moral authority to proclaim the standards in the first place. So, we got to proclaim the standard, hold fast to it, but also go and love and try and love people where they are into living as Christ would have us live. That seems to be his message.

John Bytheway: 47:51 I love this. I think with so many that I come in contact with, I have family members who are no longer meeting with us, I have friends and this advice is great. I want to make it as easy as possible for them to come back. You don't count them as an enemy, but admonish them as a brother. You still think of them as family and maybe they'll figure this out. The Lord will work with it. Maybe they'll come back and try to make that as easy as possible for them to do.

Professor Dale Sturm: 48:17 Yeah, I think that's the gist of Paul's counsel. Every time he gives it, that, "You got to go get them. You got to hold to the standard, but you've got to go get them. You got to go love them back."

John Bytheway: 48:26 Yeah, that's the Doctrine and Covenants phrase.

Hank Smith: 48:29 Dale, I like what you said there earlier about, "How would you want to be reclaimed?" If it were you, how would you want to be treated if you were deliberately disobeying the words of the prophets and apostles, the word of this epistle, and you're like, "No, I'm not going to obey," but you want someone to esteem you as an enemy? or help you as a brother? Joseph Smith says this after his first vision, Joseph Smith history, he says, "I was of very tender years and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends and treated me kindly if they had supposed me to be diluted. They should have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me." Joseph Smith even sees that in his young age like, "If you really think I'm off, then admonish me as a brother. Don't treat me as an enemy. You should have been my friend."

John Bytheway:	49:18	And here's later on in Joseph Smith's life, correct me if I'm wrong, guys, is it W.W. Phelps he writes the letter to? "Come, dear brother, though the war has passed and friends at first are friends again at last" and just come back, and he never burnt that bridge, "Friends at first are friends again at last," and maybe because he went through that.
Hank Smith:	49:38	Yeah. Dale, this has been fantastic today. If I'm at home and I'm listening and I'm folding laundry or I'm mowing the lawn or if I'm in Rexburg, if I'm shoveling snow already, what do you hope I get out of these two epistles from Paul?
Professor Dale Sturm:	49:52	Really good question. Maybe two things. One, you're probably doing better than you think you are. The Thessalonians were in a unique setting and you have this apostolic encouragement that's telling them that even though it's hard and you're trying to live the gospel and keep your covenant in affliction, you're doing great. In fact, people are talking about it. You're an example to others, so you're probably doing better than you think you are, even if your circumstances feel like, "Boy, this is just too hard." And then maybe the other thing is that prophets and apostles, the Lord's anointed, they really love those of us who are striving in the covenant. That encouragement is real. It's sincere. They get it, they understand it and their desire is to just help. We have an apostle here who loves these people and is trying really hard for them to feel it. The modern brethren love us. They want to help us be successful.
Hank Smith:	50:49	Yeah, John, isn't that really what we're hoping for our listeners, is that, "You're doing really well. You're doing great"?
John Bytheway:	50:58	Absolutely.
Hank Smith:	50:59	Yeah, keep going. You're facing some difficult things and you're doing really well.
John Bytheway:	51:04	Dale, this has been fantastic. Thanks for joining us today. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We have more New Testament coming up on followHIM.
Hank Smith:	51:20	Today's transcripts, show notes and additional references are available on our website, followhim.co. That's followhim, dot C-O. 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

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President Russell M. Nelson: 51:59

Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him. Follow him.

HOW CAN I COME TO LOVE SERVICE?



Hank Smith:	00:02	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another FollowHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the amazing John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	00:09	Thank you, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:10	John, you know the routine. We are going to take on a question from this week's lesson, which is in First and Second Thessalonians. Our question this week, John, is how can I come to love service? It might not come natural to some of us. I know it comes natural to you, John, but to me, I don't know if service is the first thing I'm thinking of every morning. So how have you come to love it?
John Bytheway:	00:35	It always gets better once you just show up, don't you think?
Hank Smith:	00:38	Yeah, I think so.
John Bytheway:	00:39	And I just feel like you learn a lot at a service project. I like to ask the kids, "So did you look around at the service project? Were you working hard or hardly working? And did you see people who are doing a job and were happy about it and were laughing and were having a good time?" It's different because a lot of it is an exercise of attitude, isn't it? when you go to a service project? It's one of those where when you get home you're always, "Okay. That was good. Okay, I'm glad I went. We had fun."
Hank Smith:	01:07	I'm glad I went.
John Bytheway:	01:07	Somebody was helped.
Hank Smith:	01:09	Yeah. Paul says to the Thessalonians, "Be an example to all that believe." And then he says later in chapter three, "Increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men." That sounds like motivation to serve, to be an example, to increase and abound in love one to another. John, I love a good service project announcement. Make sure you come to Young Men's and Young women's this week. It's going to be so fun.

John Bytheway:	01:38	But we're not telling you what it is.
Hank Smith:	01:40	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	01:41	And I think another way maybe that's motivating to me now in my old age is, because I have been given much, I too must give. The way that the Lord has given such service to us, this is not that hard. I can do this. I'm not being asked to pull a hand cart across 1,000 miles of prairie. Maybe I can do this.
Hank Smith:	02:00	Yeah, maybe I can do this. Paul says in Thessalonians 4:9, "You yourselves are taught of God to love one another." Remember what the Lord said to Peter. "If you love me, feed my sheep, feed my lambs." And that's all about service. And you don't have to go very far, John, I've noticed. Service can be in your own home.
John Bytheway:	02:25	Right.
Hank Smith:	02:25	Serving your siblings. Serving your parents. Serving your children.
John Bytheway:	02:30	The new Aaronic priesthood theme, I'll use my priesthood to serve others beginning in my own home. Not ending there, starting in my own home, which is a good reminder that love your neighbor isn't just the guy across the street. It might mean your little sister and your little brother.
Hank Smith:	02:47	Perfect. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called FollowHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're with Dale Sturm this week and we think you'll love what he does with these chapters.
John Bytheway:	03:02	Yeah, it's really good. And right now, this is the calm before the Sturm, but it's coming. It's forecasted.
Hank Smith:	03:10	It's coming, Dale Sturm. And then come back here next week and join us for another FollowHIM Favorites.