



*“Good Tidings of Great Joy”*

## **Show Notes & Transcripts**

### **Podcast General Description:**

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

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

### **Podcast Episode Descriptions:**

#### **Part 1:**

How can a Christ-centered Christmas lessen fear and increase personal revelation? Sister Joy D. Jones shares stories, scriptural insights, and the joy of Christmas in this special episode.

#### **Part 2:**

In this message, Sister Joy Jones shares personal experiences, such as the gift of her son, Trevor Jones. She also shares the joy of serving the Savior during the holiday season.

# Timecodes:

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Sister Joy Jones
- 01:23 Introduction of Sister Joy Jones
- 04:01 Sister Jones shares hopes for listeners this Christmas
- 07:02 Staying Christ centered
- 12:34 Rebirth at Christmas
- 19:04 Mary the mother of Jesus
- 22:19 Condescension of Jesus
- 28:22 Wisdom comes from seeking Jesus
- 31:58 Simeon and Anna
- 35:33 President Nelson encourages us to increase spiritual capacity
- 36:21 Fear not!
- 43:09 Good sources speak truth
- 46:07 Distractions and receiving light
- 49:28 Focus on the Savior this Christmas
- 51:47 Joy Jones in Africa
- 56:38 End of Part II–Sister Joy Jones

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Sister Joy Jones
- 00:06 Sister Jones shares visiting Saints around the world
- 03:55 Working at the Provo MTC
- 06:02 Sister Jones shares about her son Trevor
- 09:32 Letter from Trevor Jones
- 11:52 President Nelson’s thoughts at Trevor’s funeral
- 14:27 Sharing testimony amidst grief
- 15:23 Temple service at Christmas
- 16:35 John shares a story about Christmas in the Philippines
- 18:14 Christmas story in Ecuador
- 21:05 President Ballard and a special gift
- 23:13 John and Hank share Christmas experiences
- 27:09 President Monson and *The Christmas Train*
- 30:19 Sister Joy Jones and her Christmas wish
- 35:04 End of Part II– Sister Joy Jones

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## Biographical Information:



Joy D. Jones was born in The Dalles, Oregon, to Aldo and Eleanor Adelia Ellsworth Harmon, who as “very active, humble and dedicated” members of the Church became “pioneers in building and strengthening the Church” in that region.

She received an associate of science degree in family living at BYU.

Joy D. Jones and her husband, Robert, lived in Santa Rosa, California, for 14 years, where her husband opened a chiropractic practice. When the Joneses’ first son was preparing to leave home to study at BYU and serve a mission, they felt a desire to be closer to him and their other children through their college and mission years so they relocated from California to Draper, Utah, a community her husband’s ancestors helped settle. She assisted in the open house for the Draper Utah Temple in 2009, which she describes as “a continual blessing in her life and in the lives of [her] family.”

Throughout her life, she has enjoyed many leadership opportunities within the Church in various ward and stake capacities in the Primary, Young Women and Relief Society organizations. She served almost six years on the Primary general board. She loves volunteering for Church welfare projects. “Service makes my heart sing,” she said.

Joy D. Jones enjoys playing with her grandchildren, temple and family history work, cooking and nutrition, hiking and camping.

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Hank Smith:	00:04	Hello my friends. Merry Christmas from followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my magical co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome John, Merry Christmas.
John Bytheway:	00:16	Merry Christmas to everybody.
Hank Smith:	00:18	Yeah. Isn't this exciting? John, this is our third Christmas episode. Tell me what Christmastime is like in the Bytheway house.
John Bytheway:	00:26	Well, there was a time when my wife and I were trying to make things magical, as you said, and now the kids sometimes before Thanksgiving are, "Could we put up the tree? Can we do this? Can we do that?" And it's great. There's just a feeling.
Hank Smith:	00:43	Yeah, I have noticed that as my children age, their Christmas lists get shorter, but somehow more expensive. John, we are joined by the perfect Christmas guest. We have the privilege of having Sister Joy Jones with us. Joy, Merry Christmas to you. Thank you for being on our podcast. Tell us what you love about Christmas. What are we looking forward to talking about today?
Sister Joy D. Jones:	01:10	Oh, I love everything about Christmas that relates to the Savior, everything that leads us to him, and that's why Christmas is so spectacular because it is all about him. I'm delighted to see where the Spirit will take us today.
Hank Smith:	01:23	The Come, Follow Me manual starts with why does the birth of a baby bring such great joy? What a wonderful, wonderful question. Let's explore that today. John, before we move forward. I don't think Joy needs an introduction, but we better give her one. Tell our audience who Sister Jones is.
John Bytheway:	01:41	Yes. I think our audience will recognize her from a few general conference talks. I remember once I recognized her sitting at a women's conference talk I was about to give and suddenly I got a little more nervous, but she was so kind and so gracious. She made me feel good. Sister Jones is joyful to know she's a daughter of God, a covenant keeper, a seeker of truth, a lover



of all things family on both sides of the veil and a budding pickle ball player. She's always cherished children. She has five of her own and 24 grandchildren as well as the children of the world on the Primary General Board and as the Primary General President. She loves being in the service of the Lord in any capacity, especially in the temples. Tell us again when you served as Primary General President.

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| Sister Joy D. Jones: | 02:26 | I began my service in 2016 and was released in April of 2021. I had five wonderful years devoting all my time and attention to the children of the church around the world. Nothing could make my heart swell more than that humbling experience. It was fantastic, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to be in other places and to see the saints where they live around the world. That was enlightening. It was humbling. It was a beautiful experience.  |
| Hank Smith:          | 03:01 | Wow. Hopefully we'll hear more about that today. John, I have to tell you that our producer, David Perry, he recommended, he said, "What if we get Sister Joy Jones to be on the show for Christmas?" And I thought that was a great idea, so got in contact with Sister Jones and then John, I looked at the lesson it was meant to be, the lesson this week is entitled Good Tidings of Great Joy. Was that not perfect? We have a great Joy with us who's going to share lots of good tidings. When I looked at it, I thought that was a confirmation to me we got the right person.   |
| John Bytheway:       | 03:36 | Absolutely. We couldn't find anybody named Tidings, so this is great. We got a great Joy. That's what we wanted.  |
| Hank Smith:          | 03:46 | Yeah, that's wonderful.   |
| Sister Joy D. Jones: | 03:48 | Having Joy as my name is a great motivation. It's that constant reminder. Step it up, Joy, step it up. Joy is more than happy. Joy is joy. You got to go for it.  |
| Hank Smith:          | 04:01 | Well, Joy, let's get started in our lesson. I'm looking forward to hearing all about your name and Christmastime and your time as Primary General President. Let me read the first paragraph of the Come, Follow Me manual and I mentioned earlier, it starts with a question, "Why does the birth of a baby bring such great joy? Perhaps because a new baby can be a symbol of hope. There's something about a brand new life full of possibilities that invites us to ponder what life might hold for that child and what wonderful things he or she will accomplish. Never has this been truer than at the birth of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Never has there been more hope placed in a child and never has there been one born with so much promise." With that, Joy, |

lead us through Christmas. Share with us what you think will be best for our listeners to feel the spirit of the season.

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| Sister Joy D. Jones: | 04:54 | To remember him, to focus on him. There are so many distractions at this time of the year that would come in the way of that. This time of the year, the world is a little bit softer and a little more forgiving, a little bit happier. There is more hope. Just as you mentioned from the lesson, everyone seems to agree perhaps joy to the world could happen for a little while. It's like we're all pulling together saying, "This is an exceptional time of the year. It's different. It feels different." What can we do to expand that? What can we do to draw near to him? That statement, oh, come let us adore him. I love that. Let's do that. Let's adore him. |
| Hank Smith:          | 05:39 | Joy, John and I, we've gotten a lot of mileage from our names. I think everybody in the entire church has heard a John Bytheway joke about his name. I took that from him and started joking about my name being Hank and how that's more of a dog name than a people name. Now tell us about having the name Joy during Christmas. Are there a lot of items in your house with the word joy on them?  |
| Sister Joy D. Jones: | 06:02 | Yes, actually there are. That happens to be a very popular gift that we receive.   |
| Hank Smith:          | 06:07 | I bet.   |
| Sister Joy D. Jones: | 06:08 | Any item that says joy, which is wonderful because it's such a great reminder, don't we all want to feel joy. I separate it from my name. Yes, my name is Joy, but I love the word joy. I love what it means and I love seeking joy in my life. When I think about my name, I think about my parents deeply because they had four children and then they waited 11 years and they thought they weren't going to have any more family, and then I popped up so they were so happy. That's the reason that I have the name that I have. That means a lot to me. That's really special.   |
| Hank Smith:          | 06:45 | Yeah, that's fantastic.  |
| Sister Joy D. Jones: | 06:48 | I have a lot to live up to.  |
| Hank Smith:          | 06:50 | I would imagine if I had some Christmas ornaments named Hank up and if I saw my name up in the store. Yeah, good tidings of great Hank.  |

Sister Joy D. Jones:	07:00	I know what I'm getting you for Christmas.
Hank Smith:	07:02	I'm sure those items are easy to come by. Talk to us about what insights make Christmas special to you. When you think about Christmas and you think about our listeners at home, and like you said, there's so many distractions, what do you think about that you could share with them that helps you keep you centered?
Sister Joy D. Jones:	07:21	I jotted down some of the first things that came to my mind beginning to reflect on Christmas. I love all the memories that come with Christmas. We have so many memories that are stored in our hearts. You put up the Christmas tree and pull out those ornaments and each one has different meaning, different memories, different reminders of those sweet traditions in your home, in your family. I love the light everywhere, just like the light in the temple. There's more light in our homes, in our neighborhoods, in our community. It feels happy. It feels uplifting. I love all the scents. Of course, I love all the food. I love all the sounds, all the decorations. We are able to find time to turn our hearts to God, to continue in that Thanksgiving spirit that we celebrate before Christmas, to thank him, our Heavenly Father for his beloved son.
	08:19	Christmas brings to our hearts the spirit of thanks and I believe the spirit of giving as well. A number of years ago, I spoke in a Christmas devotional. I shared a little story about a mother and a daughter. She took her little girl to the mall to go do some Christmas shopping. While she was there, they said they walked under this big banner that said, "The gift that never stops giving." This little girl was so excited. She looked at her mother and she said, "Mom, I know what the gift is that never stops giving." And her mom looked at her and asked, "Well, what is that?" And she said, "Jesus." Her mom said, "Oh no, sweetie. No, sweetie. It's diamonds." And I always have to laugh, but also wince a little bit because sometimes I feel like that's the challenge in Christmas is to remember what it really is about and not be distracted by the world's version and the world's deception.
Hank Smith:	09:17	I noticed Joy, it can be heavy for moms to... I got to get ready for Christmas. It seems almost more stressful than joyful.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	09:27	That is such an important point and I'm so glad you brought it up, Hank. It's really important that we talk about that. I hope we can provide some encouragement for all those sweet moms out there. Recognizing Jesus is the gift that never stops giving. It's his birth, his ministry, his suffering in Gethsemane, his suffering

and death on the cross, his resurrection. It's about his whole life, his entire beautiful, amazing life. His life has an infinite effect on all of us. It never stops. Nephi said, "I will praise thee forever." And I love that. I love remembering that now at this particular time, we will forever worship and adore our Heavenly Father's gift, our Savior, Jesus Christ. I actually had a thought that I'd like to share with you, and I'd like your insights because I was considering the birth of our Savior, that virgin birth of Christ.

10:27 I was pondering a little bit and I want to share this thought in Luke 1:35, we know the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee." The highest, the power of the highest shall overshadow thee. "Therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God." I'd never caught that before, that holy thing, which shall be called the Son of God. In Alma 7:10, "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel who shall be overshadowed and conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost and bring forth a son. Yea, even the son of God." We know in Second Nephi chapter 11, Nephi says, "All things which have been given of God are the typifying of him."

11:26 I was thinking that perhaps we could see Mary as a type for all of us. She was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost and a birth occurred. How does this relate to us? Let's look at a few more scriptures. In Mosiah 27:25-26, "And the Lord said unto me, 'Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people must be born again.'" So there's our birth. "Born again, yea born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters, and thus they become new creatures and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God." My point is it would seem that we need to be overshadowed, so to speak, by the Holy Ghost and be born again, born of God becoming new creatures in Christ.

12:34 We want to become like that holy thing that Luke referred to even the son of God, our Savior. If we remember King Lamoni in Alma chapter 19, "Now, this was what Ammon desired for he knew that King Lamoni was under the power of God. He knew that the dark veil of unbelief was being cast away from his mind and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness. Yea, this light had infused such joy into his soul, the cloud of darkness having been dispelled and that the light of everlasting

life was lit up in his soul. Yea he knew that this had overcome his natural frame and he was carried away in God, born again." I was just thinking at Christmastime, when we think of Jesus being born by means of the Holy Ghost, could we look at that as something of a type in that Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost leading to a noble birth? Can we see that we must be overshadowed by the Spirit so that we can be born again? To me, there's a little connection so that when Christmas comes, I'm looking and saying, "Joy, how are you doing? Where are you, how are you progressing?" I love the divine reminder that his birth serves notice that we must go through a birth process ourselves that we're continually working on. This is one of the main topics that we find throughout the Book of Mormon and to me his birth is a divine pattern for us to follow.

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| Hank Smith:    | 14:23 | I have never seen that before and I love it. This is something I bring up in my classes all the time. The idea of being born again, but I've never connected it to the miracle of the Savior's birth and really being born again, watching someone be born again. Going through that change that you talked about in Mosiah, born again, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state to a state of righteousness. This spiritual rebirth is talked about over and over again in the scriptures as a miracle, the miracle of that rebirth, I've never connected to the miracle of the Savior's birth.  |
| Hank Smith:    | 15:00 | I think one of the reasons the Savior is often called the father in the scriptures is not that he's God the Father, but he's the father of this spiritual rebirth. He provides the blood in this spiritual rebirth. I think it's in the Book of Moses where the Lord says, "You were born by water, blood, and spirit. I want you born again by water, blood, and spirit," but this time by his blood. So oftentimes when I read a scripture author referring to the Savior as our father, I often think of that spiritual rebirth.   |
| John Bytheway: | 15:34 | It gets my mind racing, because I think of Abinadi with King Noah and the wicked priest, which sounds like a '50s rock band. But when Abinadi is talking to King Noah and the wicked priest and he says, "What are you teaching?" And they say, "The law of Moses," and he says, "Why don't you keep it?" And then he quotes the ten commandments and some other things, but then he opens up Isaiah talking about Jesus. "He was cut off out of the land of the living. Who shall declare his generation? But when his soul has made an offering for sin, then he shall see his seed." Thankfully then Abinadi in Mosiah 15 explains that's the rebirth, when we become the children of Christ, when we're born again. |

	16:16	When I think about the doctrine of Christ, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, second repentance of Article of Faith four, third baptism, baptism is an event. I can tell you the date and time I was baptized. But baptism is the beginning of the process of being born again. That's why I loved what you've said here about this process. And when Alma is asking them in Alma seven, they're members of the church, they've already been baptized. He says, "My brethren of the church, have you been born of God?" And so it's kind of like, "Are you progressing? Have you been born again?" And Jesus is the father of our rebirth. We are literally spirit children of Heavenly Father, but become children of Christ, in King Benjamin's words, when we are born again, which is an ongoing process. I feel like faith, repentance, baptism, and being born again, a process following that gift of the Holy Ghost, being overshadowed by that. Like you said, it's a covenant path type process. Thank you for making that connection, that all of us have to do that.
Hank Smith:	17:23	John, have you ever seen that before? Joy, this happens to me often, where someone shows me something in the scriptures and I think, "How long has that been there and I never saw?"
John Bytheway:	17:33	Yeah, maybe my pages were stuck and I didn't see that.
Hank Smith:	17:35	Yeah. How come I've never seen that? The miracle birth, it's the Savior's miracle birth, but he asks us to go through a miracle rebirth.
John Bytheway:	17:45	Yeah.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	17:45	Yes. And how many other things are we missing?
John Bytheway:	17:48	Right.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	17:49	How many other things could we connect to him? I want to know them all, and I know that we keep learning. Everything connects us to him somehow. I just love one more connection at this time of year. I feel this sweet connection to Mary. I think about her and all that she went through. I can't wait to meet her. I really can't. I have a son who passed away six years ago, and I think about her, and not comparatively, because it was a very different, different experience. But as you began, Hank, talking about the beginning of the lesson and looking into the eyes of a baby, what a privilege it is as a mother to have those things that we hold in our hearts and cherish. And I love to think about Mary and all the things that she pondered, all the things that she wondered about, how deeply connected she was to her

heavenly Father, her sweet, humble obedience. I love to think about her and try to connect as women and as mothers. I appreciate her. Thank you, Mary. Thank you for the miracle birth.

- John Bytheway: 19:04 I love what you're saying about Mary. I know that Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who we quote a lot because he said something about everything, it seems. But he said, "We cannot but think that God chose his greatest female spirit to be the mother of his greatest son." And Mary, the scholars tell us, was probably a teenager. The angel spoke these things to Mary and she was so young, and then she gave her approval when she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. I will do this. Be it unto me according to thy word." One of the things that I noticed once that thrilled me was, in fact in the Christian world, they call this the Magnificat. Have you ever heard of that?
- Hank Smith: 19:47 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 19:47 Sounds like a really nice place to lie down, a magnificat, but it means, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." And she goes on, this starts in verse 46, "My soul doth magnify the Lord. My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." Notice the pronouns. She doesn't talk about, "I'm wonderful, I'm great," and she was, but she says, "He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. He that is mighty hath done to me great things. His mercy is on them that fear from generation to generation. He hath showed me with his arm, he hath put down the mighty from their seats." Elder Gerald Lund says, "Whoa. Mary had a great understanding of the Old Testament in order to be able to say all these phrases in Luke 1 there." Because a lot of those are echoes from Old Testament phrases.
- 20:38 We learn a lot about Mary right here, and kind of an interesting parallel is Nephi's psalm in Second Nephi chapter four. Mary in a moment of great exultation and Nephi in a moment of, "Oh, wretched man that I am," that then says, "But I know in whom I have trusted. My God has been my support. He has led me through the wilderness. He has led me through the sea." I circle all those pronouns and I look at this. Both in these great moments and in these hard moments, we send it to God. We acknowledge God. I love how Mary did that here probably as a very young woman.
- Hank Smith: 21:15 John, I like this connection you're making. If I can connect it back to something Joy taught us, it seems that these miracle births we've been talking about, both for Mary and for us, involve agency. The Lord will never force a spiritual rebirth upon

anyone. It must be chosen. The same way with Mary, there's no forcing of her to do this. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." We have to say that same thing, don't we, Joy, in our spiritual rebirth? We have to say, "Behold the servant of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word."

- Sister Joy D. Jones: 21:50 Isn't it beautiful how he honors our agency? We choose, and what a glorious opportunity that is for us.
- Hank Smith: 21:57 Yeah, we get to choose the miracle if we want it.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 22:01 That's right.
- Hank Smith: 22:02 This is great. Man, Joy, how come I've never seen that before? It's something I will think about for the rest of my life at Christmas.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 22:10 That's what we want, right?
- Hank Smith: 22:11 Yeah.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 22:12 Had you ever noticed that term, "The holy thing," this holy thing that Luke referred to? Isn't that interesting?
- Hank Smith: 22:19 Yeah.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 22:19 It happens to have been the God who created the universe, which could lead us to consider the condescension of Jesus Christ. That's what I kept thinking, that holy thing. We're talking about a God who left his throne and came to earth to a manger. That true condescension, a human baby enters the world totally helpless, completely dependent upon his parents for every physical need, and that's what Jesus did. I was hoping I could share with you a quote from Elder Tad R. Callister that he shares so beautifully in The Infinite Atonement.
- 22:56 "The Savior's descent to humanity was personally announced by the Savior to Nephi on that first Christmas Eve. 'Behold, the time is at hand. On the morrow I come into the world.' Oh, the magnitude of that sacrifice, that condescension. That night God the Son traded his heavenly home with all its celestial adornments for a mortal abode with all its primitive trappings. He, the king of heaven, the Lord omnipotent, who reigneth, left a throne to inherit a manger. He exchanged the dominion of a God for the dependence of a babe. He gave up wealth, power, dominion, and the fullness of his glory. For what? For taunting,



mocking, humiliation, and subjection. It was a trade of unparalleled dimension, a condescension of incredible proportions, a descent of incalculable depth. And so the great Jehovah, creator of worlds without number, infinite in virtue and power, made his entry into this world in swaddling clothes and a manger."

24:14 I added a question that Elder D. Todd Christofferson asked, speaking about the condescension. He said, "Why this near inconceivable degradation? God the Father out of his perfect love for us, his perfect love for us, allowed his holy Son to descend to this mortal sphere to begin his mortal ministry among men." That's something to remember as well, to really begin to comprehend the magnitude of his condescension coming as a tiny baby. My question when I think about this is, will we receive his gift, this marvelous gift that he's given us? Do you mind if we talk about that word a little bit, receive?

Hank Smith: 25:01 Let's do it.

Sister Joy D. Jones: 25:02 Can we do that?

Hank Smith: 25:03 I know John loves to talk about that word.

John Bytheway: 25:05 I do.

Sister Joy D. Jones: 25:06 Good. The word receive is a very important word throughout scripture. This word is in the very first command we are given as members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Receive the Holy Ghost." In four of the verses of the oath and covenant of the priesthood in Doctrine and Covenants section 84, we read the word receive eight times. It ends with, "And he that receiveth me receiveth my father, and he that receiveth my father receiveth all that my father has." John testified, "He came unto his own and his own received him not, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons," and might I add the daughters, "of God." The Savior said the same thing to the Nephites in third Nephi chapter nine, verse 17. "As many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God."

26:09 As we receive him. As we receive him. That's got to be conscious. We've got to think about it. He blesses and empowers us. How we receive him matters. I believe we can receive his love and we can pass it on. And isn't that what we're talking about today? Isn't that what Christmas is all about? It's his love. I wanted to give you some examples. The story of the

birth of Christ illustrates this idea of receiving quite beautifully. If we look at some of the characters involved in the Christmas story, let's see how they received him. If we start with Herod, of course Herod considered himself the king of the Jews, and he found out about a little baby that was born and people were calling him the king of the Jews. Herod was quite troubled by that. So how did he receive Jesus?

27:07 He decreed that all male children under the age of two should be put to death. He wanted to end the life of Jesus Christ because he saw Jesus as a threat. Do we see in our world today, in a symbolic manner, people who perhaps try to eliminate the influence of Christ in their lives or reject him altogether because of what discipleship would require of them? And there may be other parallels as well. That's an example of not receiving him, Herod's example. I thought the innkeepers could come next. We all know the story of Joseph and Mary as they wander the streets of Bethlehem seeking lodging. There was no room for them in the inns. Elder Holland suggested that there was no room for them in the inns because they were poor. They were basically being discriminated against. There might have been room for others, but not for them. Another interpretation is that there literally was no room for them in all the inns. The obvious question is, are our lives so busy that we don't leave room to receive Jesus?

28:22 I'm trying to pull a little application out of these different characters in this beautiful Christmas story. The wise men, we know they were wise because they sought the Son of God. They were diligently seeking him. And you always hear that quote today, "Wise men still seek him." Are we wise men? The wise men traveled a great distance. It took at least a couple of years, we know. Jesus was not an infant when they greeted him. Our pathway to receive Jesus is often a long journey as well. It takes time. We know they fell down and worshiped the Christ child when they finally found him. How do we worship him? When we thank Heavenly Father for the gift of his Son, we're worshiping him. When we bear our testimonies, we're worshiping him.

29:13 When we reverently partake of the sacrament, when we ponder the words of the scriptures, the words of modern-day prophets, or most importantly as we seek to be more like him, we are worshiping him. There are so many ways that we worship him, that we receive him as the wise men did. One more thing about the wise men I would share is that they brought gifts to little Jesus. They didn't just come to receive, they came to give as well, and I think that's significant. We are also asked to bring

something to our Savior. But what do you give to a God who has everything?

- Sister Joy D. Jones: 30:00 The Savior tells us clearly in scripture and in the temple that the gift he asks of us is that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. I thought we could repeat the well-known statement from Elder Neal A. Maxwell. The submission of one's will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God's altar. The many other things we give are actually the things he has already given or loaned to us. However, when you and I finally submit ourselves by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God's will, then we are really giving something to him. It is the only possession which is truly ours to give. I think all he wants for Christmas is our hearts.
- 30:43 Mary, let's talk about Mary again and receiving. We've talked a little bit about that wonderful verse, how she received Jesus. Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Mary and Heavenly Father are the only ones who really knew what she was thinking, but surely it was a very tender, introspective time for her. What an example Mary is for us. Can't we receive him by cherishing and reflecting back on the sacred moments that we share with our Savior?
- 31:14 Another form of receiving him, remembering we've worked a lot with return missionaries and when they come home, we always sit down with them and ask, did you have experiences where you really felt the Spirit when you were teaching, or when you were studying, when you were having some experience with someone new to the gospel? Were there times where you'd felt an overwhelming outpour of the spirit and they would always say, oh yes. Well, did you write it down? Yes, it's in my journal. Go back and read it. Remember those experiences. Recall what you felt. Don't forget what you felt. That's something else we can do to receive him.
- 31:58 Two lesser known figures in the Christmas story are Simeon and Anna. We know their story. Simeon was told years before Jesus' birth that he would witness the Messiah before his life ended. Anna had been a widow for 84 years, which is so hard to comprehend. During that time she served in the temple night and day. That tells us much about Anna. She and Simeon recognized that this baby was indeed the promised Messiah as soon as they saw him. Their example of receiving him came through years and years of waiting on the Lord. When we are promised blessings that don't come fast enough, can we remember Simeon and Anna who waited on the Lord faithfully,

patiently and without complaint? That one, boy, that's a zinger for me.

- Hank Smith: 32:53 Yeah, without complaint, that one comes natural to me.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 32:57 Yes, I agree. I hear you.
- John Bytheway: 33:00 That idea of receiving is so interesting to me. And I think one of the first times I had a different understanding of the word receive in the scriptures was we've had Michael McLean on the podcast before and he made that little movie called Nora's Christmas Gift. And here was this super woman who was doing everything for everybody and then all of a sudden got some macular degeneration and couldn't see, and she tried to make English toffee and the salt accidentally spilled in there. She didn't know it and she was down listening to the choir and she heard, maybe you've heard this hymn, Joy to the world, the Lord has come. Let earth receive her king, and the lights went on that she had to learn to receive instead of just give. It was a great little moment when that word, oh, I have to receive Him. I have to receive help from others, and that was a hard thing for her to do. I loved that moment.
- 33:56 And then there's another thing that earlier this year, Hank, when we were going through the Matthew account of the Christmas story, which contains the wise men, I thought how interesting they go in to Herod and Herod gets the chief priests and the scribes and demands of them, where will Christ be born? They know their scriptures, but they had not received the light, because they knew. They came right up with Bethlehem. The Messiah is being born just a few miles away and they don't even know it. They were probably great scriptorians, but they hadn't received the Holy Ghost perhaps in the same way that the wise men did, that they received revelation. Is it possible to know our scriptures really well but not receive the Holy Ghost? It sounds like it because those guys knew it.
- 34:42 One of my favorite verses ever is in section 50 of the Doctrine and Covenants, "That which is of God is light and he that receiveth light," To me, that word receive means more than just you're in the room where the light's turned on, but you're letting it in. It's an active thing. "He that receiveth light and continueth in God." Those three words, we can do a whole podcast on continue in God, and, "He that receiveth light and continue with God receiveth more light and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day." But when you say receive, I always think of that verse. And when you have a question, you don't unplug from the source of all light. You stay

plugged into the source of all light, in other words, you continue in God and then you'll receive more light. You're right, Hank. I do love the word receive, because I think it's an active word.

- 35:33 I was confused as a kid in section 76 when it talks about those in the terrestrial kingdom who receive not the testimony of Christ and I thought, oh, well that's not fair. They didn't hear it. No, they didn't receive it. It's a different meaning. It's they didn't let it in. They may have heard the gospel but didn't receive. Oh, so it's more of an active thing, allowing it. Didn't accept is the way I put it in my margin. They didn't accept the testimony of Christ.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 36:02 Do you suppose that's why President Nelson keeps encouraging us to increase our spiritual capacity to receive revelation.
- John Bytheway: 36:09 Yeah, receive to let it in and the Herod's priests knew the scriptures but they hadn't received the light.
- Hank Smith: 36:15 Picture a receiver on a football team who just won't put their arms out, right, won't put their hands out.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 36:21 Yes. That's a great visual. Another figure in the Christmas story we need to remember is the angel. As I was studying these Christmas passages, I saw the words, fear not, repeated four times. And I hadn't paid attention, I guess, that it was actually four times the angel Gabriel told Zacharias to fear not when he told him that his wife would bear a son in her later years, she was aged. The same angel told Mary to fear not as we've talked about, and later an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph and told him to fear not, to take Mary as his wife and explained that Jesus would be born. And the shepherds who were sore afraid of course, were also told to fear not. And yet the message by our Savior was a message of peace. Peace on earth, goodwill toward men. Why was the message fear not repeated four times? I'm curious. I'm thinking about it. It's human nature, the fear of the unknown. What thoughts do you have? Why would there be four different specific times in this Christmas story where they're told fear not?
- John Bytheway: 37:32 I think seeing an angel is frightening. When Jesus was walking on the water, they were afraid. They thought it was a spirit and he said, be of good cheer. I think he said, fear not too, it is I. What's that Matthew 14? I love the idea that the first principle of the gospel, first part of the doctrine of Christ is faith in Christ and that's the opposite of fear. So that the message would begin with fear not is the same as saying power up, is get your faith. This is a great message. This has nothing to do with fear.

This is hope and happiness and the very best news I could possibly give, came after the fear not.

- Sister Joy D. Jones: 38:14 It's almost like don't let fear spoil it. Don't let fear get in the way.
- John Bytheway: 38:18 Whenever angels come to earth, they seem to say, you people down here, you fear a lot, don't you? Have you heard of faith in Christ? Come on. I love that idea. You worry too much. You regret too much. You anticipate bad things too much. Fear not. I love the message of that.
- Hank Smith: 38:36 Change can be scary. I can almost hear angels saying to us, turn your life over to the Lord. Go through this spiritual rebirth. Fear not. It's scary to hand your life over and you want to be in control, but you turn your life over to the Lord and you might hear that same echoing of fear not, it's going to be okay. President Benson, turn your life over to the Lord. Let that spiritual rebirth take place and he'll make a lot more out of your life than you can.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 39:06 Oh, I love both of your thoughts so much. I really sat and pondered this and I jotted down something similar. I thought the angel came to say, Fear not, this is all according to the plan. It's all part of the plan. In Doctrine and Covenants, section 67 verses two and three. "The Lord said, behold and lo, mine eyes are upon you." He's watching everything that's happening. "And the heavens and the earth are in mine hands." I'm in control as you said. Everything is okay and the riches of eternity are mine to give and certainly these were the riches of eternity that were being shared.
- 39:45 The Lord told the saints in this dispensation in D&C 67 in this next verse, why they didn't receive the promised blessings. That's worth considering as well. "Ye endeavored to believe that ye should receive the blessing which was offered unto you, but behold verily I say unto you, there were fears in your hearts and verily this is the reason that you did not receive." It's important to remember that. Are we limiting blessings, promised blessings, because we fear because we're not exerting faith and trust in the Lord? Could fear prevent us from receiving blessings? Could the application for us, be don't live in fear, rather live in faith?
- 40:29 You've probably heard worry is just another form of atheism. It's true. Do we have faith or do we have fear? Do we trust or not? I'm fascinated though by this concept of the fact that

Heavenly Father sent an angel four different times to say fear not. I think there's a message there for us.

- John Bytheway: 40:48 I've often thought of the different assignments angels get. I don't know exactly who they are. This was Gabriel in a lot of these cases we're talking about because he told us that. Sometimes angels come to warn or to scold like they did with Alma and the four sons of Mosiah, but imagine getting this assignment that you get to come and good tidings of great joy and how much fun that must have been for the angel.
- 41:12 In that story I referred to earlier about Jesus appearing on the sea and telling them, be not afraid. Elder Holland commented on this. He said, "This scriptural account reminds us that the first step in coming to Christ or his coming to us, may fill us with something very much like sheer terror. It shouldn't, but it sometimes does. One of the grand ironies of The Gospel is that the very source of help and safety being offered us, is the thing from which we may, in our mortal short-sightedness, flee. For whatever the reason I have seen investigators run from baptism. I have seen Elders run from a mission call. I have seen sweethearts run from marriage and I've seen young couples run from the fear of families in the future. Too often, too many of us run from the very things that will bless us and save us and soothe us. Too often we see gospel commitments and commandments as something to be feared and forsaken."
- 42:11 Such an interesting idea that something that maybe starts with a fear not is the very best thing that could happen. And not to let fear make your decisions for you, I think, it was what Elder Holland was saying.
- Hank Smith: 42:27 Yeah.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 42:28 Yeah, that's so beautiful. Don't they always say, do the thing that you fear the most and then the courage will come?
- Hank Smith: 42:36 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 42:36 Fear is false expectations appearing real, F\_E\_A\_R.
- Sister Joy D. Jones: 42:44 Yes. I love that.
- Hank Smith: 42:45 It's funny, the things that we're probably supposed to fear that we don't fear. Nephi says, "Lord, make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin." We should probably be fearing sin, yet

we don't. We should be seeking God, yet we don't. We get our fears and our seeking mixed up. We get them backwards.

Sister Joy D. Jones: 43:05 Mixed up.

Hank Smith: 43:06 Yeah, at least I do. Neither of you do, but I occasionally.

John Bytheway: 43:09 Or maybe we feel that Satan tries to put a spin on living the gospel. It's too hard, it's too legalistic, it's too much pressure, it's too much stress. But what do we hear from angels? We hear fear not. We hear glad tidings from Cumorah. We hear this is the best news possible. Don't let Satan put his spin on that. This is hope and help and joy and no fear. That's what we hear from the best sources like Sheri Dew says, "Go to sources that only speak truth. What do they say? They say, fear not." I love that.

Hank Smith: 43:42 Yeah. The truth will make you free.

Sister Joy D. Jones: 43:44 I so treasured the opportunity when I was serving in primary to watch the brethren and to witness their great faith, their great obedience and consecration. I've always appreciated a statement from President Boyd K. Packer. This is relating to fear. He said, "In this church, we do not fear. I have been sitting in the councils of the brethren now for some 34 years or so. I have seen disappointment, shock, and concern. Never once for one second, have I ever seen any fear and you should not." Don't you love that? I think that's powerful. I have witnessed that. I do not see fear in the leaders of our church. Quite the opposite, I see the greatest faith emulated for us to watch and to follow.

Hank Smith: 44:40 Joy, it had to be a little fearful to speak in general conference, right?

Sister Joy D. Jones: 44:45 Oh, yes.

Hank Smith: 44:45 There had to be some fear there.

Sister Joy D. Jones: 44:48 I'll confess I have way too much fear. I'm working on that one actively. Hey, don't you know how fearful I was coming to be with you?

John Bytheway: 44:58 We're pretty scary.

Hank Smith: 45:00 We are pretty scary. Yeah.



Sister Joy D. Jones:	45:00	<p>You're pretty scary. Yeah. I wanted to read to you something from a good friend, Wendy Ulrich said, "Sometimes fear prompts me to action, but mostly it prompts me to whine. It seems some part of me is afraid not to be afraid. Afraid that if I admit God's comforting presence is sufficient, then he will expect me to be brave instead of protecting me from the threat." Oh, that rings so true, so true. I love the words of our living prophet Russell M. Nelson. He said, "When so many around us are burdened with fear and uncertainty," is that not the case in the world today? "I invite you to make room in your heart for those around you who may be struggling to see the light of the Savior and to feel his love. Jesus Christ was born to cast out all fear and bring everlasting light and joy to all who follow him." So that feels good, that feels good. Thank you President Nelson.</p>
Hank Smith:	46:07	<p>Joy, you've talked about distractions and receiving the light, and I know as a parent that I want Christmas to be special for my children and I'm thinking about Christmas lists and gifts and trying to make sure that our children have a magical experience, and I know my wife is a hundred times more worried about these things than I am. How can someone, a parent, or anyone, who feels Christmas is a little more stressful than joyful, how can you receive the joy of the season more than the stress of the season?</p>
Sister Joy D. Jones:	46:47	<p>That's the question. And you mentioned wanting to make it magical, and I understand exactly what you're saying, we want it to be magical. And then we talk about the miracle birth and we're trying to determine, what is it we're creating? How do these mesh? How do these work together? I jotted down, can we experience a few minutes of semi stillness to focus on what the Christmas celebration is about beyond the overwhelming expectations that we often put upon ourselves?</p>
	47:18	<p>Something that I find really satisfying, this is so simple, I love to sit down in the room where the Christmas tree is with all the lights off except the Christmas lights. I love to sit and enjoy the glow of the light in stillness, some peace and quiet to ponder his light, ponder his love, ponder his peace. And you really have to work to do that, you really have to work to make that happen, because we're on the go. We're constantly doing, doing, checking off our lists.</p>
	47:48	<p>I did have a quote to share with you from Elder Christofferson. He said, "I hope you will dial down the noise and take some time this Christmas season, at least an hour, if not more, to reflect on the wonder and the majesty of the son of God. Let it</p>

be an hour of reassurance and renewal for you. Take time to relax, be at peace, and see this little child in your mind. Do not be too concerned or overwhelmed with what is coming in his life or in yours. Instead, take a peaceful moment to contemplate perhaps the most serene moment in the history of the world when all of heaven rejoiced." I have to do a little shout-out to Sister Patricia Holland. We love her and miss her so much. I loved something that she shared with us. "As I look back at my life and if I could live any part of it over again, I would do one thing differently, very differently, simplify." She said, "It seems to me that everything is better when it is simplified, our food, our clothing, our furnishings, and our schedules." I went to the Orem Temple open house recently. This beautiful sister walked up to me and she said, "Sister Jones, thank you," we were talking about something that I'd said in a talk about women wearing too many hats. She said, "I needed that." And I said, "Well, tell me, right now, are you wearing too many hats?" And tears welled up in her eyes and she just looked at me and nodded her head, "Yes."

49:28

Elder Patrick Kearon, I love something that he shared in a Christmas devotional. He said, "Young mothers and all of us, are you overwhelmed? Where is your focus? Perhaps this year you don't send those Christmas cards or you let go of some other perhaps media inspired expectation you have of yourself. The cost in either time or money will take away some of your ability to focus on the Savior and feel his Christmas joy." Now, he didn't leave out young fathers. He then went on to say, "Young fathers, and the rest of us, where is your focus? Perhaps this year you have a simplified Christmas with more homemade gifts and gifts of service because the pressure and cost of trying to buy it all is too great and unnecessary and it will take away some of your ability to focus on the Savior and feel his Christmas peace."

50:20

I love that. His name shall be called wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace. That's what it's all about. And we all work at it individually and as families trying to get that appropriate balance. And I think again, we go to our knees in prayer and we involve our heavenly Father. That's always the answer is seeking his help and his guidance. And feeling his love, because when I feel his love, I feel peaceful. I feel like everything's going to be okay. It's what I do up here that takes away that peace. When I begin to listen to these thoughts that tell me I have to do this and I have to do that, and it won't be the same if I don't include that, it's not true. Those are lies.

John Bytheway:	51:07	I was thinking about how much relief I felt that this year Christmas Eve is on a Sunday because it's just going to be a lot easier to focus and to take out the commercial because we'll be at church singing and talking about Christ and taking the sacrament. Do you feel that same way, or does it just make Saturday the 23rd worse? I mean, how do you guys feel about it?
Hank Smith:	51:34	I may be at the store. I may be at the store on Saturday.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	51:40	I love it when Christmas Eve or Christmas falls on the Sabbath. It's so precious, so, so beautiful.
Hank Smith:	51:47	Joy, I know as a dad that there's a feeling of, how does our Christmas compare? Almost a feeling of, you don't want to say competition, but you want to have an Instagram worthy Christmas. You traveled around meeting with saints all over the world. Can you share with us what you saw and how that can help us maybe have a better perspective, a more Christ-like perspective?
Sister Joy D. Jones:	52:11	I remember early after I had been called to be Primary General President. I was sitting in a lunch next to Elder Bednar. He said, "Have you been to Africa? Have you been to West Africa?" I said, "No". He said, "You have to go. You have to go." I always think back about that conversation with him because I thought, "Oh, that sounds amazing. I would love that." But little did I know how that would change my life to visit, I believe we were in five different countries in West Africa. The people there were so happy and they had so little as far as material possessions. They had so little. I remember the smiles. I remember their smiles.
	52:55	Speaking of joy, they seemed to just possess a deep sense of joy and gratitude, so much gratitude. I received this little nativity. It is treasured. I'm telling you, I pull this out at Christmas now, I'm so protective of it because it's made of twigs. Every little piece of this nativity is made of twigs. Here some sweet person so creatively used the materials that they had to make this precious nativity that means so much to me because when I look at it, I feel the love that I felt for those beautiful saints in all of those countries where times were tough. They had been through so many things. They'd lost loved ones, and they'd been through wars and they'd been through deprivation and trying to determine, how will I put the next meal on the table? Oh wait, I don't have a table.

	53:53	I remember someone told me, "When you come home, you'll come back with African eyes." I did. I came back and I thought, ugh, to see all of the things that were there, that I knew my friends and brothers and sisters in Africa didn't have access to, nor did they feel the need for. It was a wake-up call for me to recognize, what do I really need? I need my testimony of Jesus Christ. I need his love and light in my life. It's helpful to recognize that yes, I might not have the newest iPhone, if I compare that to someone else who has one, I'll remember that statement that comparison is the thief of joy because in actuality, there's always someone who has less than we do, who has greater needs than we do. It's a good reminder to stop, to pause and teach our children, to help our children to understand. And it's hard, it's hard in a very materialistic world to teach that principle.
Hank Smith:	54:53	Yeah, it's difficult. With children you seem to be fighting every advertisement and it's the culture many of them grow up in. You can't get upset with a child for thinking this way because, especially in the United States, Christmas used to have a religious connotation to it. We've blown it up into a completely commercial exercise. I know my children get caught up in it. I'm sure the Bytheway children never have. They're probably like, "No father, no mother. I don't need gifts this year. I want to serve." But the Smith children have a little bit of their father in them and like material things. I really love the picture I have in my head of those West African saints loving life, I'm sure not having a carpeted, heated living room full of Christmas gifts on Christmas morning.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	55:46	Dirt floors, yeah.
John Bytheway:	55:48	Yeah, that's what I experienced in the Philippines, people living their whole life in something the size of a Tuff Shed, a dirt floor, a campfire in the corner that was a stove, and then they would whisper to their children, "Go get the Elders a Mirinda." We're like, "No, no. Please don't spend any money on us to go buy us a bottle of soda." It sounds like that sort of a thing. And I can't not think about the Grinch and the Whos singing, "Christmas is within our grasp as long as we have hands to clasp." When all their gifts were gone, that was the one thing that they could still smile because we're here and we're together and we have hands to hold onto and that's pretty good.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	56:34	That's beautiful.
Hank Smith:	56:38	Please join us for part two of this podcast.





John Bytheway:	00:01	Welcome to part two with Sister Joy Jones, Christmas.
Hank Smith:	00:06	Joy, you mentioned your time serving as Primary President and traveling to different countries. I think our listeners would love to know what that was like to you.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	00:15	There are not words to describe what I felt in those experiences. I just hold those tender experiences in my heart, and truly looking into the eyes of children. When we're talking about Christmas, Christmas is about children. We've talked about remembering the sacred and wondrous gift of birth and babies. Babies make us feel such hope and newness of life, and our Savior brings a perfect brightness of hope and the promise of eternal life. When I look into the eyes of babies, I'd have to comment on that first sentence in the Come, Follow Me lesson. Why does the birth of a baby bring such great joy? There is nothing like holding an infant. It's almost what I would imagine a celestial experience to be. And I want to know, brethren, where do you look first when you hold a little baby? Where do you look first?
Hank Smith:	01:10	In those big, bright eyes.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	01:13	Yes. You look right into those beautiful eyes. Eyes are truly the window to those precious souls as far as I'm concerned. I used to stare into the eyes of my babies and I would literally ask the little one, "Where have you just been?" You know those moments where you contemplate where they've been, what they still remember, what they've experienced. Babies connect me to heaven. They connect me to my Heavenly Father and to my heavenly home. They truly bring a spiritual connection. Babies thin the veil. It's just sacred to hold a baby. I was thinking about all the art depictions that we see of how the Savior might appear, what he might look like. We see so many beautiful representations, and I've noticed that when I look at a new painting of the Savior, I always tend to look at his eyes. I go right to his eyes. As I was serving on the Temple and Family History Executive Council, one of our responsibilities, along with three

of the quorum of the 12, was to approve new artwork for the temples.

02:23 It was such a beautiful experience. Sometimes we would view the art on a big screen, and other times we would be in the boardroom. We would actually see these paintings being brought in where we could actually see them framed, and they were stunning. Of course, many of the paintings were of our Savior. My eyes were drawn to his eyes. I started thinking about why. Why am I drawn to his eyes? What is that word drawn? Why do I feel that? Because I feel that it does have special significance to feel drawn to him.

03:03 Let's turn to Third Nephi, Chapter 27, verses 13 to 15. "Behold, I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you, that I came into the world to do the will of my father because my father sent me. And my father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross, and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me. That as I have been lifted up by men, even so should men be lifted up by the Father to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. And for this cause, have I been lifted up. Therefore, according to the power of the Father, I will draw all men unto me."

03:55 I know missionaries, as we work with missionaries in the Provo MTC, these missionaries are preparing for those kinds of experiences when they're meeting with people who are learning of the gospel for the first time, learning of Jesus Christ sometimes for the first time, and feeling drawn as they begin to understand the doctrine of Christ, as they hear testifying from these wonderful missionaries. These individuals who are seeking truth feel drawn to him. The Savior's purpose in being lifted up upon the cross is to draw all men unto him. Considering Christmas, of course, again, the shepherds were drawn, the wise men were drawn, children were drawn, so our question that we can ask ourselves is are we drawn to him? I think of things like that that we can talk to our children and our grandchildren about. Use some of the scripture terminology, read some of the scriptures, and then ask them to explain, what does that mean? How does that apply to us? How can we draw closer to him? I want to be drawn to him.

Hank Smith: 05:05 Excellent. Joy, you mentioned the beautiful moment of looking into a baby's eyes. As you said that I thought of my experience as a dad, and for us it was a baby boy. We have one girl and four boys, and I would hold that little baby boy up to my face and look into his eyes, and then he usually threw up on me. And I

both love and hate the back and forth between these serene spiritual moments and then the reality of mortal life. Christmas is a lot that way, isn't it? It's these serene, beautiful, amazing moments like you said, sitting in the dark and looking at the Christmas lights on the tree, and then the long lines, traffic, and trying to prepare for Christmas. In your experience as a mother and a grandmother, what have you learned that our listeners could benefit from? What have you learned about parenting and children?

Sister Joy D. Jones: 06:02

Lots. What an education it is to be a parent and a grandparent. My thoughts go to the education that we received as our son at the age of 39 passed through the veil and left his wife and five children. I look back and I remember thinking, we're living the gospel. The family's all doing great. Everything's good. Everything's intact. Then we found out that Trevor had cancer. And I thought, well, of course he'll be healed. Of course he'll be healed. We prayed and prayed and prayed that there would be a miracle and that he would survive that illness. By the end of three years, we were praying that Heavenly Father would take him because of the suffering that he was experiencing. I share that only because it was an education. I want you to know, we learned so much about heavenly father and his love and his mercy.

07:01

I marvel at what it's like to have a child on that side of the veil as well as children on this side of the veil. It's really precious because Trevor, he had time. He had three years not knowing if he was coming or going, but he prepared his family and he told them, "I'm sure that I signed up for this." He would always talk to them about what a great guardian angel they were going to have, that they'd always be able to call on him. He said, "I'll be able to do more for you from the other side of the veil than I could ever do for you here on the earth." I can remember little Sabrina came to me one day, this was before Trevor passed, and she said, "Grandma, grandma, I'm so excited I'm going to have the best guardian angel ever."

07:48

It's amazing to me that our little children can really understand that life goes on. It's not over. This is an eternal process. I'm so grateful for the experience that I personally had, to feel the peace that passeth all understanding. I had never felt peace like that before. Trevor's funeral was the day before general conference began. It was a Friday. I was speaking that night in the women's session. I can remember, I'm not exaggerating, okay? You've got to believe me. I was so excited to speak in that session of conference because all I wanted to do was stand up and tell the world, he lives. He lives and he loves us. I was just



so anxious to testify of my Heavenly Father and my Savior, Jesus Christ, to say their love is so perfect, so permeating, so real. I felt so carried through that whole experience, and I will never look back at Trevor's passing without feeling that peace,

Sister Joy D. Jones: 09:00

and feeling the love of my Heavenly Father and feeling such a magnified appreciation and gratitude for what my Savior did to allow my son to someday live again. It's just so big and so good, and I'll try not to get too excited. Elder Uchtdorf said that hope is enthusiasm and confidence, and so we've got to have enthusiasm about all things. I just pulled up a little email that Trevor sent to us right before he passed away and I want to share it with you to get to know him a little bit.

09:32

He said, "Family, I am so excited to see the other side and don't you be bitter that I beat you there. As I was lying in my purple haze last night, I was thinking of how neat it will be there. No politics. Everyone is anxiously engaged. We're all blissfully happy all the time. I will receive assignments and it will be a joy running to and fro fulfilling the will of the father and the son, helping others on earth passing back and forth through the veil as needed. The plan is real. Christ is our Savior and I can't wait to see him even if just from afar as he speaks or makes a visit."

10:13

"Through this journey, I've never asked why. I signed up for this. I volunteered to return early to help prepare your grandchildren and to help you all get through this quickly dwindling telestial world. When you pray, ask for me. Ask for me to be assigned to fulfill your request. When I receive those assignments, I will be so happy each time, a connection back to my earthly family. You will soon have your own personal guardian angel. We've all had them already, but this time it will be me."

10:44

"And when your time comes to join me on the other side, know that I will be the first to greet you, there to welcome you and have all things prepared for you."

10:54

I share that because isn't that the message of Christmas? Think of our Savior and what he has done for us. This is what we have to look forward to, to be together as eternal families, to live with our Savior and God, the Eternal Father once again. That is the most powerful message and all the world needs to understand and feel and live it. I get so excited about the gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil because we really are working with our loved ones. They're helping us when we're doing our family history, our temple work.

	11:32	I feel the influence and the urgency to continue to move forward and not be distracted, to stay focused on what really matters. Thank you for letting me share. You would love Trevor. I wish he could say hi. He had a great sense of humor.
John Bytheway:	11:50	That is priceless.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	11:52	President Nelson spoke at his funeral when he was President Nelson, the president of the quorum of the twelve. He assured all the family, we were all sitting there in the front and he said, "I just want you all to know that Trevor will be given hall passes," something like a hall pass that you had when you were in grade school or middle school and you went to the library or maybe went to the restroom. He'll get hall passes too and you can call on him and he will come and be with you. He will come and help. We have felt his presence at ordinations of his children and special times when one of our family members have been speaking or something and they just have these impressions that Trevor's aware and he's there.
	12:35	I want to see what it's like over there. I wish we could get a glimpse of what they're experiencing on the other side because I know it's glorious and I know that wonderful things are happening there.
Hank Smith:	12:47	One of our guests, Derek Sainsbury, I don't know if you remember back in our Doctrine and Covenants here. He said, "Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost." You think of our loved ones like Trevor and when we feel the Holy Ghost, we feel that beautiful uplifting ennobling influence to do good and to be like you said, Joy, have enthusiasm, that could be our loved ones speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost. Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost and when I feel that beautiful uplifting feeling, the other side of the veil can be communicating with me.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	13:26	In those moments, doesn't that dissipate the fear that we were talking about?
Hank Smith:	13:30	Yeah.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	13:31	Fear seems to become unnecessary. It seems to go away and we feel hope in Jesus Christ.
Hank Smith:	13:39	Yeah. You can see why the angels would say fear not.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	13:43	Yes.

Hank Smith:	13:44	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	13:45	That letter from your son is a gift that keeps on giving. I think that will bless so many people to think of it that way. When people say religion is a crutch for weak-minded people, here's someone who the night before they're speaking at General Conference has a funeral for her son and then you are excited. That sounds like power. That sounds like your testimony. It's not a crutch. It's a sword. We call it the sword of the Spirit and sometimes you have to lean on your sword from time to time. That gave you power and enthusiasm to go speak at General Conference the next day.
	14:26	Incredible.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	14:27	John. I've had people say that to me. They'll say, how did you speak in General Conference the day after your son's funeral? And all the glory goes to the father. I use that as an opportunity to tell them I am so grateful to him. It was him. It was nothing that I did. I take no credit whatsoever. I was held up by angels and given that privilege. It was a privilege and it was a blessing and it fortified me to be able to stand before the saints and to be able to declare my love and my testimony. I want to make sure that the glory goes to him and to our Savior because their power, you're right. We cannot comprehend it. It's just too glorious.
John Bytheway:	15:12	Your testimony of their power helped you do that. That's beautiful.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	15:16	And I'm so grateful.
Hank Smith:	15:18	Yeah. The gospel is not weight. It is wings.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	15:22	Yes.
Hank Smith:	15:22	Yeah.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	15:23	I love that. Oh, I love that. Amen. I was going to share with you another quote from Elder Kearon because we're talking about the other side of the veil and work on both sides. He said, "Temple service at Christmastime can be especially meaningful. The temple corrects our focus, magnifies our joy and unites families here and on the other side of the veil. Consider temple service instead of another Christmas activity that may not help you in your longing for that Christmas stillness" that we were talking about,

	15:57	<p>“Those holy ordinances, the peace and priesthood power they hold for all who cherish them are only made possible because of the only begotten son of the father, this lamb slain from the foundation of the world whose birth we now celebrate.” Isn't that beautiful? I love that and I agree. I have to tell you, I love all the Christmas lights. I love it that you can look out and see Christmas lights everywhere. But to me, the lights of the temple they're on all year long. I just love it. I just love it that you can always pick out the temples because those lights are shining brightly all year long to remind of him.</p>
John Bytheway:	16:35	<p>When I was on my mission in the Philippines, my companion and I were walking in our barrio and there was a tree that was just lit up with fireflies. I had never seen anything like it. All the people gathered around told me that they had never seen anything like it. We had just come from Christmas conference, they put on Mr. Kruger's Christmas. I'm watching snow falling on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, my hometown. I come home and I see this tree lit up with fireflies. I couldn't help it. I thought, did I just get a Christmas card from Heavenly Father?</p>
	17:13	<p>Did he send that to me? No. No. I am not near that important that he would, but could he have? And I was stuck in that place of acknowledging his hand in all things and I didn't know what to do with that, but I just decided Heavenly Father steered me to walk down that street and see that tree. It reminded me when you talked about the lights and it was glowing.</p>
Sister Joy D. Jones:	17:35	<p>And he did do that just for you. You don't even question it. There is no accident. He loves you that much.</p>
John Bytheway:	17:44	<p>It's funny that of all the Christmases that I've had, they blend into each other, but my mission, oh, I remember that one in great detail.</p>
Sister Joy D. Jones:	17:57	<p>Divine orchestration. How he does that. Is amazing, isn't it?</p>
Hank Smith:	18:03	<p>Heavenly Father said, "Merry Christmas Elder," and I thought, "This is the coolest thing."</p>
Sister Joy D. Jones:	18:08	<p>Oh, I love that, and I know he does that for his missionaries. I know he does.</p>
Hank Smith:	18:14	<p>Joy, what you said there reminds me of a story told by my friend, Carl Grossen. He talks about experiencing Christmas away from home as a missionary in Ecuador, and he says, "Being so near the Equator, I knew I would not be having a white</p>

Christmas like those I was accustomed to. I had lots of thoughts of home, turkey, games, lights, caroling," and then he said, "I had that sense of a need for a familiar feeling of Christmas in my unfamiliar surroundings." He said, "I felt a renewed urgency to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ so I could make the Christmas season more meaningful."

- 18:52 He says, "One day we were given a warm welcome at the humble home of Senor Torres. He told us he'd been waiting and praying for the truth for eight years. For two months, my companion and I had passed by this house daily without stopping. Brother Torres told us later, 'I always wanted you to stop to ask about your church, but you were always walking so fast that I thought you were too busy for me.' Prayers had been answered, we began teaching Senor Torres and his family with great joy. Christmas Day drew nearer and we could hardly wait to see this family as we quietly approached their home for a fourth visit."
- 19:25 "Before we knocked on the door, we saw through the window a scene that touched our hearts, beauty emanated from all around the family as their loving dark eyes, rosy cheeks and soft, innocent faces glowed in the dimly-lit room. Beneath a two-foot artificial tree on a table in the corner of the room, lay the miniature figures of a nativity scene telling the story of another small family."
- 19:49 "Centuries after that nativity the Torres family, in similar humble circumstances, sat around an old table. Two young girls leaned anxiously over their mother's shoulder as she read the book we had given them."
- 20:03 And he says, "The eldest child, eight-year-old Victor, was seated across from his mother watching attentively as his father played Silent Night on a rusty old xylophone." Then he said, "Victor ran to greet us, came in, we sang Silent Night."
- 20:18 Then he says this, "On the third week of December, Christmas seemed complete as I watched brother and sister Torres and Victor all dressed in white and enter the waters of baptism and become members of the church. My companion turned to me and said, 'Looks like it's a white Christmas after all.'"
- 20:36 I love that idea of Christmas, and you said the temple. One of our activities could be a Christmas tradition of making it a white Christmas and getting our family to the temple.

Sister Joy D. Jones:	20:50	That's so beautiful.
Hank Smith:	20:51	Joy. This has been so fun. These insights and these stories, this is a perfect Christmas episode for followHIM. Is there any other thoughts you had coming into this that our listeners could benefit from?
Sister Joy D. Jones:	21:05	I want to know your Christmas traditions, but I wanted to share something because we're missing our dear President Ballard, and I want to read this to you, but I want you to imagine his loving voice. Hear President Ballard as I read this story from him, his words.
	21:21	He said, "Sometimes at Christmas we have trouble finding the right gift for a loved one. As a missionary, I had the opposite problem. I had the perfect gift. I just wasn't sure who I was going to give it to. When I was in Edinburgh Scotland, near the end of my mission, I saw a beautiful pink cashmere sweater set, a Scottish specialty in a shop window. There was no one I had in mind for it. I just knew I wanted to buy it, so I did."
	21:47	"When I got home and was unpacking, I showed the sweater set to my mom who asked, 'What in the world are you going to do with this?' Very confidently, I answered, 'I'm going to find the girl who fits it and I'm going to marry her.'"
	22:00	"I gave that sweater set to Barbara Bowen for Christmas in 1950. It was a bold move considering we weren't even steadily dating at the time. I was pleased to see that she adored the sweater set. A short time later, we were engaged. That was more than 70 years ago. During this Christmas season, I give thanks to God our father for sending his son Jesus Christ to the Earth. The Savior overcame death and sin. If we follow him, we can experience everlasting joy at this time."
	22:33	He said, "Although my sweetheart and eternal companion has passed from this Earth life, I know that because of Jesus Christ's willingness to come to Earth, to fulfill God's plan, we all can return to our heavenly home to live with our heavenly parents, our Savior, and our loved ones once again."
	22:51	I love that story thinking of him being back with Sister Ballard, truly with all of his family and loved ones on the other side of the veil. What a grand great missionary. He's been called the greatest missionary. What an example President Ballard was to us, and just love and miss him. Can I ask you what your favorite Christmas traditions are?

John Bytheway:	23:13	I have to credit my wife for this. She felt the nativity scene needed to rival the Christmas tree. Usually the Christmas tree is the big object, the bright thing.
	23:24	She got one, the figures are pretty tall. We put this on a table, but underneath she puts a layer of lights and then some burlap, and then that on top of there we have a Bluetooth speaker playing Silent Night in a loop. I'll tell you, it draws you in when you see that.
	23:46	We also, she found a Christmas village of Bethlehem, so instead of small town USA, it's this Bethlehem Christmas village, and it gives us a backdrop for reading the Christmas story. That's been something that I'm really grateful that my wife had this idea of the nativity scene drawing you more than the Christmas tree. I mean, it does me, I don't know maybe with the kids, no, but that draws your eyes because it's so beautiful and lit up.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	24:15	It sounds inspiring.
Hank Smith:	24:17	Yeah, there's something about getting those boxes out and getting those decorations out that really brings a wonderful feeling.
	24:27	When my wife Sarah brings out those Christmas ornaments that we've collected. When you see each one, it brings back a flood of memories. Even the ones we had when we were first married, we still have some of them. Many have fallen victim to a child grabbing them and pulling them off the tree, and then we think, "Well, there goes the Christmas ornament for 2001. That was a good year. We don't have that Christmas ornament anymore," but some have survived, and the flood of memories that comes with each one of those ornaments is fantastic.
	25:01	For a while, and this is something we probably need to do again, sometimes Christmas traditions come and go, and I think the pandemic slowed a lot of our Christmas traditions or changed them, but maybe I need to talk to my sweet wife about bringing this one back.
	25:16	For a couple of years, we would give our children \$20 or \$30 starting on December 1st, an amount of money, it doesn't matter how much, and we would say, "We want you to give this away at some point between now and Christmas Eve. It can be to anyone or anything. It can be a donation. You can't give it to yourself." That was often the first thought was, "Okay, I give it to myself today."

	25:42	It led my children to be on the lookout for people who might need something. I remember my son, Mason, we were at dinner. He looked across the restaurant and saw a family eating and he thought, "I want to use it right now." We brought their server over and we were able to give them the money and we were able to watch as their server told them, "Hey, your meal is covered here." That to me was a really neat tradition, something that I had forgotten about. Thanks for asking Joy.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	26:11	Oh, I love that. That is Christmas, and you never forget those experiences. You hold that right in your heart, and to see your children experiencing the joy of giving.
John Bytheway:	26:23	My kids are a little bit older than Hank's now, but it's really fun to see them get to that place where suddenly they get more excited about giving than getting. And one of my daughters that's good on the smartphone has created a text for everybody except Andrew, everybody except Natalie, everybody except... And we're all texting, "What's a great gift?" And to see them get excited about, "I found just the perfect thing," to experience how fun it is to give this perfect gift instead of just to get one. It's so fun to see them get to that place where, "You can't wait to see what I got for Matthew," it's really fun to see them.
Hank Smith:	27:00	How fun.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	27:02	They'll remember that more than the gifts they received, they'll remember the gifts that they were giving. Oh, that's so sweet.
John Bytheway:	27:09	President Thomas S. Monson wrote a book called The Christmas Train, and he talked about giving a train card to another kid and he said, that is the day when giving became more important than receiving. He reached that moment and it's fun to see that happen. Because I just tell my kids, I don't need anything, just be nice to each other. That's all I need.
Hank Smith:	27:29	Yeah.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	27:32	It reminds me of Ring and Runs. You've probably done where you're anonymously leaving things on people's porches and I have memories of the scrapes and the bruises of the kids as they're sliding on the snow, trying to get the two blocks where the car is waiting for them to come and jump in. But our children are all grown and they still talk about the ring and runs, doing 12 days of Christmas reading and acting out the nativity on Christmas Eve. Remember this year's theme for light the world is let your light shine, that's pretty appropriate. The



Messiah, that's always a wonderful tradition at Christmas. Mistletoe, don't forget the mistletoe. The stillness of Christmas Day, that's something that I always think about is how the world seems to just stop on Christmas, and you'll look outside and you don't see any cars going by, and everything just feels quiet. And hopefully there's a blanket of snow depending upon where you live, but there's something really special about that. I want to share my favorite Christmas tradition because we've done it forever. It makes me realize, wow, we've been around for a long time, but we started a tradition early in our marriage, and it's a testimony meeting. It's the very last event. We have to go through all the events of Christmas Eve, but that's the very last. We all gather around the dining room table and each person has their own candle in a little holder, and we light the candles, and each person takes a turn bearing their testimony. It doesn't matter the age, however young or old, everyone participates. It's become a really sacred little experience. We've been really happy to see that our grown children are now doing that with their children in their homes. It's just sweet to be able to recognize how we feel about him, and to be able to express it to each other, to voice our feelings, and sometimes I see a tear or two on the cheeks of a grandchild, and we sing a reverent version of Happy Birthday to Jesus and then we have a little birthday cake.

29:35 It's sweet. It always reminds me, therefore, hold up your light, that it may shine unto the world. Behold, I am the light which ye shall hold up. I am the light which shineth in darkness. That's what we want to do. So many of our Christmas activities and traditions are cherished and remembered because they're concentrated focused time as family. That's what I love remembering from my childhood is, I got to see more of my dad at Christmas. He was so busy and I just remember that was just sweet to have fun time, downtime with both of my parents. Cherish that time together.

Hank Smith:	30:11	What your children want most for Christmas is you.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	30:15	Yes, so true, so true.
Hank Smith:	30:19	Joy, what a treat this has been. I think our listeners will think of it as a Christmas gift, having you join us. What would you like our listeners to take in?
Sister Joy D. Jones:	30:29	One of you mentioned the importance of giving, that that's more important than receiving. And I couldn't help but think about Christmas as being about ministering. We talk so much about ministering. We're trying to learn how to minister as the

Savior ministers. We can do ministering all year long. We don't have to do it just at Christmas. It's such a privilege. Ministering though is the true spirit of Christmas, I believe. We can practice the spirit of Christmas in our missionary service, our temple and family history service. We can give that gift to someone else here or across the veil. What a gift we give as we share friendship, as we share our testimony, as we share our love and our time. Time is often the greatest gift of all, isn't it? President Nelson said, and you're familiar with this. He said, "Anytime you do anything that helps anyone on either side of the veil take a step toward making covenants with God, and receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances, you are helping to gather Israel" and that is gift giving at its best, that's what really matters.

31:46 Here we are preparing for the Savior's coming. What a glorious time it is to be on the earth and what a glorious opportunity it is for us to celebrate Christmas as the Savior's life, as his mission, as all of the incredible blessings that come to us because of him through his atoning sacrifice, and his resurrection. It's such a blessing and I wanted to share a scripture from Doctrine and Covenants 109, verse 77. This was of course the prophet Joseph Smith, and he's describing the Savior. I love the scripture. Listen to all of his superlatives as he tries to describe the Savior. He describes him as a being who is enthroned with glory, honor, power, majesty, might, dominion, truth, justice, judgment, mercy, and then perhaps sensing the futility of trying to list all of the Savior's virtues. He ends excitedly summing it up with and an infinity of fullness, from everlasting to everlasting. Isn't it a comfort to celebrate and worship a Savior that we can never exaggerate? I remember President Nelson's sweet, simple, but powerful counsel in last General Conference when he said, "Put Jesus Christ first." As we strive to think celestial, put Jesus Christ first. Hopefully we can make that our application from our time together today. Let's put Jesus Christ first.

Hank Smith:	33:28	What a beautiful Christmas message. Merry Christmas.
John Bytheway:	33:34	What a day. I think that there will be thousands of people who listen differently and think of their loved ones as guardian angels, because that beautiful letter from your son. What a Christmas gift. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	33:47	Yeah.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	33:48	We'll thank Trevor.
John Bytheway:	33:49	Thank you Trevor.

Hank Smith:	33:51	Sister Jones, thank you for taking your time with us today.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	33:55	It's been delightful. Thank you so much. I have loved being with you.
Hank Smith:	34:00	Merry Christmas.
Sister Joy D. Jones:	34:02	Merry Christmas.
Hank Smith:	34:03	We want to thank Sister Joy Jones for being with us today. It's been an absolute treat. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen. Shannon, thank you for giving us and our listeners such a wonderful gift each and every week. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. Join us next week. We have another lesson on the Book of Revelation, we're going to finish the New Testament on followHIM.
	34:35	Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references are available on our website <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> , <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> . And you can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on Facebook and Instagram. All of this is absolutely free, so be sure to share with your family and friends. To reach those who are searching for help with their Come, Follow Me Study, please subscribe, rate, review, or comment on the podcast, which makes the podcast easier to find. Thank you.
	35:02	We have an amazing production crew we want you to know about. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Cuadra. Thank you to our amazing production team.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WHO JESUS CHRIST  
WAS BEFORE HE WAS BORN?



Hank Smith:	00:03	Hello my friends. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. It is Christmas here at followHIM. I'm here with my friend John Bytheway. Hi, John.
John Bytheway:	00:11	Hi, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:12	We are going to cover a single question from this week's Christmas lesson. The question for this week's lesson comes right from the manual, John. It says, what do you know about who Jesus Christ was before he was born? When I ask that question, what comes to mind?
John Bytheway:	00:28	Earlier in the year we did the Book of John. It says, "In the beginning was the word and the word was God, and the word was with God. The same was in the beginning with God." And John is kind of the only one who speaks of Jesus' pre-mortal existence, and it speaks of him and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. But it also says that he created everything. We know that he was the Creator. We know that he was with God before. We know that the Atonement was part of the plan from the beginning.
Hank Smith:	00:55	Absolutely. As Latter-day Saints, John, you know that we have the benefit of the Pearl of Great Price. There's a couple of insights from the pre-mortal life in that book, one from Moses, chapter four, that the Savior was chosen from the beginning. The Atonement was part of the Father's plan all along, and then there's this phrase in Abraham chapter three that says "There stood up one among them that was like unto God" giving us insight into the Savior's status. He was significantly different.
	01:27	John, something that comes to my mind, I've heard you talk about this before, is in the Book of Mormon, there's this moment where Nephi is seeing the birth of the Savior and the angel asks this question of Nephi "Knowest thou the condescension of God?" In my mind, I hear that angel saying something like this. Nephi, do you have any idea who that is? Do you have any idea where he is coming from and where he is

		going to? Knowest thou the condescension of God? And Nephi doesn't know.
John Bytheway:	01:58	Yeah. Nephi gives a great answer.
Hank Smith:	02:01	Right.
John Bytheway:	02:01	The more we study the scriptures, the more we think, yeah, we talk about being laid in a manger. It was a trough for animal food, the things that he allowed people to do to him on Earth. So, the more we ponder that, the more we think, yeah, that was a really good question that angel asked.
Hank Smith:	02:21	Knowest thou the condescension of God? And Nephi's answer, I know he loves us.
John Bytheway:	02:25	I don't know the meaning of all things, but I know he loves his children, which is a really good thing to know.
Hank Smith:	02:30	And what a great Christmas message, John, from Nephi. Maybe he didn't intend to give us a Christmas message, but I know he loveth his children. That's really what Christmas is about. I know that God loves his children. I know that the Savior loves us.
John Bytheway:	02:45	Right.
Hank Smith:	02:47	Well, Merry Christmas to all of our listeners and thank you for staying with us this year, but don't disappear just yet because we have another New Testament lesson next week. But this week join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We're going to be visiting with Sister Joy Jones, who served as the Primary General President for five years in the church, and then join us next week. We'll be back here for another followHIM Favorites.