



"I Am He Who Liveth, I am He Who Was Slain"

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

How does expectation affect our relationship with Jesus Christ? Sister Courtney Rich explores the healing nature of the Savior's Atonement. She discusses healing anxiety, depression, the importance of commitment through difficulties and the personal nature of Jesus Christ's Atonement.

Part 2:

Sister Courtney Rich continues to testify of the significance of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and recognizing God's hand in our lives.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 00:00 - Part 1 - Sister Courtney Rich
- 01:45 Sister Rich's childhood Easter memories
- 3:00 Bio of Courtney Rich
- 07:19 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 09:13 The Atonement of Jesus Christ is a personal experience
- 10:28 Throwing mom under the bus
- 14:42 "Death makes us all children again"
- 16:13 Reasons to love Mary Magdalene
- 21:02 Unmet expectations
- 23:13 How can we forget?
- 28:19 Forever changed through waiting on the Lord
- 30:53 Stay, seek, and make cake
- 32:55 Jesus never turns away
- 37:56 He knows you
- 41:11 He is there, we just don't see Him
- 42:10 The Road to Emmaus
- 44:11 Unmet expectations
- 48:21 We knew it was Him all along
- 52:18 A Book of Evidences
- 56:15 Jesus exceeds expectations
- 57:43 - End of Part I - Sister Courtney Rich

Part 2 -

- 00:00 - Part 2 - Sister Courtney Rich
- 01:08 "Lord, I Believe" by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
- 04:08 Jesus as Influencer
- 09:10 Don't return to fishing
- 11:34 The surprising message of Easter
- 13:30 Relationships, always relationships
- 16:11 "Drawing on the Power of Jesus Christ in our Lives" by Elder Russell M. Nelson
- 19:18 Heartbreak lets the light in
- 20:05 How Do I Know that I Know?
- 25:31 You don't get apples for years
- 28:01 Going to the temple, not the cemetery
- 30:38 A story that took 20 years to understand
- 34:12 Recipes are instructions, not suggestions
- 39:42 Sister Courtney Rich bears her testimony of Jesus Christ
- 44:20 End of Part 2 - Sister Courtney Rich

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Biographical Information



Courtney Rich is a self-taught baker, who’s love of baking and obsession with cake went from an occasional hobby to a passion just seven years ago, and is now something she shares with over 700,000 followers on Instagram as Cake by Courtney. Teaching herself through trial and error, Courtney develops and shares her recipes and tutorials so other home bakers can create great tasting and beautiful looking cakes. Courtney also teaches classes at Orson Gyi in Salt Lake City, recently published her first cookbook, designed her own product line of cake tools, hosts a podcast, and has been featured in O! Magazine, The Today Show, The Kelly Clarkson Show, Hallmark Home and Family, Extra TV, and entrepreneur.com. Courtney also makes monthly appearances on Studio5 here in Salt Lake City.

Prior to cakes, and even when she first started her blog, Courtney freelanced in television research as a focus group moderator. She worked with many of the top broadcast and cable networks in the industry to test new and existing television shows, as well as talent performance and website usability. Some of her clients included ABC, NBC, Viacom, Martha Stewart, Lifetime, Discovery Channel, TLC, and Warner Brothers, to name a few.

Prior to her 13-year career in television research, Courtney worked as a producer for KUTV in Salt Lake City and a writer and reporter for Celebrity Justice, a news magazine show developed by the creators of Extra. Courtney holds a Bachelor’s degree in Broadcast Journalism from BYU. She serves on the General Young Women Advisory Council for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Courtney is married and a mom of two kids, Westin 16 and Avery 11.

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Hank Smith:	00:00	Coming up in this episode on FollowHIM.
Courtney Rich:	00:03	For most of my adult life, I struggled with depression and anxiety from about the age of 18. Not something I think most people would look at when they take a glance at social media. And for many years, even the people in my closest circle were very unaware of what I was experiencing. Really didn't know what my relationship was with the Savior, and if he saw me, because I was still battling and fighting my demons, trying to plead for his light in my life, for my trial to be lifted. And I still very much felt alone and unseen by him. I remember thinking to myself, wow, okay, maybe this gospel isn't for me. And I heard the word so clearly and it was,
Hank Smith:	00:53	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. Happy Easter. John Bytheway, it is Easter at FollowHIM. Talk to me. Tell me about Easter in the Bytheway house.
John Bytheway:	01:07	I have a very talented artist daughter. Ashley got some modeling clay and made the most beautiful Easter Garden tomb. Then we get one of those little lights that you stick underneath it and it has this little dim light inside and it becomes something to look at through the month. We've had nativity scenes for years. We need an Eastern nativity scene. It's beautiful.
Hank Smith:	01:34	We have a guest with us who she and I have become friends over the last year or so. Her name is Courtney Rich. Courtney, welcome to FollowHIM.
Courtney Rich:	01:43	Thanks for having me. Good to be here guys.
Hank Smith:	01:45	We are excited to have you. John, you know how I stew over guests, how I think who's the best fit here? This came together really well, clicked into place. Courtney, when you think about Easter, what comes to mind?

Courtney Rich:	01:59	Oh, I mean, I think a lot of my childhood memories and the things that we did as tradition in our home, whether that was the Easter dinner or egg hunts, carrying some of those same things with my kids. We recently also got more of a Easter nativity, which is, I need more of that in my life. The more I study about Easter weekend, the more I really want to celebrate and think about and be spending time on it like we do at Christmas time.
Hank Smith:	02:28	If we could in our minds switch to that focus, it's hard. It's against the tradition when the world puts up those Christmas lights and the music starts playing, it feels right to get into the spirit of it. But Easter, you're in the middle of spring, A lot is going on, kids in school and you might miss it if you're not paying attention. John, Courtney has never joined us before, but she is not an unknown. There are going to be a lot of people who already know Courtney well, do you have some information her?
John Bytheway:	03:00	That's right. Courtney Rich, she is a member of the Young Women General Advisory Council. So she works with the young women general presidency. Her area, as she's going to tell us I'm sure, is a lot of social media stuff. She's an expert, has training in broadcast journalism from BYU and now runs young women worldwide. That's what it's called, right?
Courtney Rich:	03:21	Yeah. Young women worldwide. And I spend a lot of time working on that with the churches team and then also President Freeman. And it's a space I feel comfortable with. So it's fun to be a part of that.
John Bytheway:	03:32	And I think some of our watchers are going, Hey, I think I've seen her on television as well. You're from born and raised in Wheaton, Illinois, right?
Courtney Rich:	03:41	Well, born there and then raised all over from Chicago to Pittsburgh, Southern California, little time in Utah, back to Southern California. That's where I finished high school. So Southern California's home. Although I will always claim Chicago as the birthplace, and I'm a fan of the Bulls and I grew up loving Michael Jordan.
Hank Smith:	04:02	That's fantastic. I am a fan of Michael Jordan up until about 1997, 1998.
Courtney Rich:	04:08	Oh yeah, that sounds about right.

John Bytheway:	04:09	Just that one game. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	04:12	<p>Yeah. That love ended. Yeah. I think it crushed our dreams. John, I have to tell you, I did not get to know Courtney through the church. I was on Instagram and I don't know how it happened, but we somehow connected on Instagram and she has this account, you can find it easily. It's called CakebyCourtney, all one word, 700,000 plus followers. She creates the most beautiful desserts. In fact, John, there's one oatmeal butterscotch salted caramel cookies. Now, Courtney, how do I get some of these? John, I gotta tell you, these are my favorite things. And you can watch the video of her making them. And it's, I'm dying right now. I actually have to turn it off because I am so hungry. So Courtney, when did this start this cake by Courtney?</p>
Courtney Rich:	05:13	<p>I started Cake by Courtney about 10 years ago this August. But the baking and diving into that, that became a hobby about 15 years ago. So my son just turned 16 in December and I made my first cake from scratch when he turned one. We were living in Santa Monica at the time, so kind of a foodie scene was developing. We were close to my parents and also my husband's parents. We would go up there a lot on Sundays actually and have dinner at the Riches. And I just remember watching my in-laws in the kitchen and I mean, my mom is a great cook, so this is no knock on Diana. Mom, you are such a yummy good cook. But I would watch what Rick and Connie were doing in the kitchen. It felt like next level stuff. And so I'd always watched and wanted to help and be a part of what they were doing in the kitchen and learn from them.</p>
	06:02	<p>So when Westin's birthday came around, I thought it'd be really fun to make a birthday cake from scratch. That was something I'd never done before. I'd made cookies and brownies and pies and all that stuff with my mom, but a cake from scratch. Like, ooh, that felt like a big moment, a great way to celebrate. Truth be told. I was trying to impress Ryan's parents. I thought, okay, I make this cake from scratch and this is totally true. I was like, I think they'd give me more responsibility in the kitchen and I had so much fun. I fell in love with the process of it and then sharing it with people. Found any excuse to get back in the kitchen and teach myself. So I did that for years. I was working in media consulting, freelancing, starting my family. And then we moved here 10 and a half years ago and a year into being here, I was like, I've got some recipes. I think I'll share them online and see what people think.</p>
Hank Smith:	06:52	And it sort of worked.

John Bytheway:	06:53	Amazing.
Hank Smith:	06:54	Three quarters of a million people following it. What I love Courtney, is every once in a while you let people know what you believe. It's really fun to see that because Cake by Courtney is definitely reaching across faith lines to members of other faith or no faith at all. Here you are saying, oh, I know you love the desserts, but also I think you'll love what I believe.
Courtney Rich:	07:16	Yeah, I love Jesus too. Let's talk about him.
Hank Smith:	07:19	Yeah, let's talk about him. Well, let's do that today. I frequently tell my students, do you know about April 3rd, 1836? And they kind of look around. Should we? Yeah. I'm like, yeah. Do you like being with your family forever? Because this needs to be a holiday April 3rd in our church. I'm going to read from the Come, Follow Me manual. April 3rd, 1836 was Easter Sunday after helping administer the sacrament to saints in the newly dedicated Kirtland temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery found a quiet place behind a veil and bowed in silent prayer. Then on this sacred day, when Christians everywhere were commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the risen Savior himself appeared in his temple declaring, I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain. What does it mean to say that Jesus Christ is he who liveth? It doesn't just mean that he rose from the tomb and appeared to his disciples in Galilee.
	08:19	It means that he lives today. He speaks through prophets today. He leads his church today. He heals wounded souls and broken hearts today. So we can echo the words of Joseph Smith's powerful testimony after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony which we give of him, that he lives. We can hear his voice in these revelations, witness his hand in our lives and feel the joy this sentence gives. I know that my Redeemer lives. Oh, this is wonderful. And before we started Courtney and John, we talked about the people listening that our hope is to help heal wounded souls and broken hearts. I love that. That's going to be our focus today. Courtney, what do you want to do? Where should we start?
Courtney Rich:	09:13	Oh man. There's so much I'm excited to talk about. I feel like yes, we've got this Easter lesson really centers around the idea that resurrection is this huge grand victory for all and it is. But as I look at it and as I've really been studying it this last little bit, you know, I have realized and felt how very personal and intimate of an experience it is for each of us. I feel like as I've been focusing on the timeline and the events of Friday through Sunday specifically, I've seen more and more how many

opportunities there are to see ourselves in these people that we're reading about and their experiences. Spending some time in John 20 and Luke 24, thinking back to when you first reached out to me. I texted back and I immediately was like, oh, whew, Hank, I think you got the wrong person.

10:03 This is Courtney. I'm the one that does the cakes. You assured me that it wasn't a mistake. And after saying yes and talking about it for a minute, of course, had some doubts creep in. And I was thinking to myself, I don't know what I just got myself into. So naturally I text my mom and my sister and tell them what's going on, and they're both familiar with the show and both listen. And my sister responded immediately and was like, oh, that's awesome I can't wait. Then my mom responded, we just kinda laugh. By the way, she knows I'm saying this so I'm not just throwing her under the bus.

Hank Smith: 10:38 Okay, okay.

Courtney Rich: 10:38 But her text was, oh my gosh. Wow, that's a lot of pressure. I mean, their guest list is usually comprised of incredible experts of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Joseph Smith papers and scriptures. She kind of goes on and she goes, you'll be great.

Hank Smith: 10:56 You'll be fine. But that's a lot of pressure.

Courtney Rich: 10:58 I text back and like, thanks mom. Yeah, no I know. I knew that part. I was kind of coming to you to build me up a little bit there, and she did. She built me up plenty. I was still thinking about that later that day and I was walking through my house and headed up to my bedroom. I kind of started having this conversation with myself just of no, really, actually, what did I just sign myself up for? I'm not qualified. I've listened to this podcast. I know the type of people, the experts that are on there, and I said to myself, what do I even know? And right as those words are here, the Spirit very clearly whispered to me, you know me. And I stopped and I said out loud, yes I do. And I just, this wave of comfort and reassurance. I am not on here to give you the perfect timeline of the historical events.

11:54 I can't quote scripture without looking it up and writing it down and remembering it. But I know my Savior, Jesus Christ, and I've had some personal experiences with him that have helped me understand what that relationship really looks like, and that is something I can testify of and that I can share. That kind of started me down this line of questioning, what does it mean to know our Savior and how does that happen? How does it change us? Ultimately, how does that make us or help us

become a witness of him? As I started looking through the Easter lesson, I was looking at D&C 110, but also the accounts in the New Testament. I really felt like these events that took place and the experiences that Mary had and the disciples had, they give us a lot of answers and insight to those questions that I was thinking about.

12:47 I feel very connected to Mary Magdalene in a lot of ways. I'm going to start with her story, but I was thinking just to give us a roadmap of what we're going to get into the next little bit, breaking up into actually four experiences recorded within Luke 24, John 20, and actually a little bit into John 21 if we have time. So we'll start with Mary, who I feel like really teaches us so much specifically about having personal experiences with Christ. What it means to seek him, to witness of Him, to know Him, his voice, and ultimately how we learn that he knows each of us by name. Another moment in those scriptures, Cleopas and his friend, his traveling buddy on the road to Emmaus, where we learn a lot about expectations and trusting the Lord. There's some things there that stood out to me. And then also when Christ appears to the disciples who like many of us need to be reminded of the things that we've learned and the experiences we've had, and we'll go back even into D&C and talk about Oliver Cowdery a little bit there too. If we do have a little time, I'd love too, to go where in John 21, where Christ appears to Simon and the disciples again after the events of the resurrection, and we learn what it really means to take upon his name, be disciples, and be witnesses of him. Are we feeling okay about that?

Hank Smith: 14:11 That is fantastic. You just hit a couple of stories where I went. Oh, that's great. Oh, I love that one too.

John Bytheway: 14:17 I'm thinking about the fact that isn't it wonderful that every year the Come, Follow Me curriculum focuses on or revolves around a certain book of scripture. However, every year we have an Easter episode, because none of this happens without Easter. We get to today be very broad and we can look at the New Testament. We can look at the Doctrine & Covenants too as we talk about Easter.

Hank Smith: 14:42 That's fantastic. John, having known you for quite a while, and you've known me for quite a while, we both have experienced some funerals of beloved people. Both of us have buried our parents. Those are moments where time seems to stand still for just a minute, you get to do a deep search in your soul. I can't remember who it was that said, death makes us all children again, where expertise means nothing. It's you and your grief

that also can be quenched by really in my mind, only one thing. And that is Easter. Right? And what we celebrate there.

- John Bytheway: 15:30 Really well put. How did [Elder Maxwell](#) put it? Eventually you're backed up to the wall of faith and you're, do I believe this? Hank I bet you did what I did. You had that one last time when you touched the casket of your mom and your dad. Looking forward to, can I touch mom and dad again? Can I embrace them again because of Easter? Mm-hmm
- Hank Smith: 15:55 Mm-hmm.
- John Bytheway: 15:56 All of that hope comes back. There's going to be a separation for a time, but because of Easter, it's going to be brought back.
- Hank Smith: 16:03 Yeah. It's an expectation, right John?
- John Bytheway: 16:06 Mm-hmm.
- Hank Smith: 16:07 Yeah. Like it's, it's not a, well, I sure hope so. It's a fully expect. I love it. Yeah.
- Courtney Rich: 16:13 Let's dive in. I love Mary for so many reasons and feel like I relate to her stories. We'll talk about her experience at the tomb in two very magnificent moments that she had. So we'll come back to those in just a moment. But I think it's important to talk about and remember Mary before the resurrection of Christ. And to remember what her story is and where she came from. We know that Mary had a really hard life before meeting Jesus and before being healed. We don't know all the details. We know that the scriptures talk about evil spirits, that Christ healed her of torment. She struggled, she was in pain and I'm guessing, felt very alone, probably forgotten. Things that you and I have probably felt and can relate to. I mean the trials of mortality. And really, while we maybe don't know exactly what she experienced, or maybe it's different from what we experienced, we could put ourselves in her shoes.
- 17:12 We can think of ourselves as her. She represents us in so many ways because of what she was going through and living through the trials of mortality. And when she meets Jesus, he heals her. He changed her life. She has this very deeply personal experience with him. One that bound her to him after years and years of pain. She became free of this unthinkable burden. And it was replaced with a deeply personal and unforgettable witness of the Savior and his divine power, mercy and kindness. And I just keep thinking about this personal experience she had

with Jesus Christ because it was then that she followed him and she followed him throughout his ministry, serving him, testifying of him. And there she was at the cross and up before dawn on Sunday morning, I think about that. She's been with him for how many years now?

18:06 All this time. Every day. And suddenly he's gone. We read in John 20 that she runs. After she sees that the stone is moved, she goes inside, she doesn't see his body and she runs to Simon. And the other disciple, which we know is John And then they both run. You know how there's certain words or things that stand out to you as you're reading in scriptures, but the word run or ran is usually one that I circle. I do love to run, actually, I'm a runner, but I also just love that when it mentions that in the scriptures there's commitment there. Running somewhere is a commitment. Running means there's purpose. You could be excited. It could be from fear, it could be a race, an exercise. But you never run on accident. That's never an accidental thing.

Hank Smith: 18:52 An accidental running.

Courtney Rich: 18:54 How many times in the scriptures it talks of men and women running to the Lord or on his errand? It gets me excited about those stories. Think about the urgency that Mary and the disciples probably felt throughout all of this. They run back. You know, it's interesting because Simon and John, they're there. They see that the body is gone. I don't know what they expected. I mean nothing like this has ever happened. I don't know really what they expected, why they didn't remember the things that they had been taught, but they left. We'll come back to their remembering and expectations in a little bit, staying focused on Mary right now. Mary stayed. She stood and she stayed. And there's so much in this moment. And just that sentence, there was a quote that I read by [Gaye Strathearn](#) in an article called Women at the Tomb, lessons from Disciples of Christ when Heaven feels closed, Mary wasn't in the garden by accident.

19:53 She was there because ever since the Savior had ministered to her, she had given her time and means to minister to him. I don't believe that she was at the tomb just out of responsibility to prepare the body for burial, but that she came because she loved the Lord, knew of his divine mission and longed to be with him because even though she found an empty tomb, she stayed after others left. Because she stayed she had these two magnificent, very personal and intimate experiences. I read that in the last couple months as I've been thinking about that. Like it wasn't by accident. Her commitment to the Lord was so deep,

so strong, so meaningful that even after he was gone, her heart aching, not knowing exactly what was going to be happening next, she went to him or where she thought he was, seeking him. It made me think and ponder the last little while. Where do I stay? Where do I stand as I seek him? And what does that look like in our own lives? Are we taking the time to stay, to find him, to look?

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|----------------|-------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 21:02 | I really like what you've pointed out here, that she stays. Like you, I don't know what they expected. I think it's not this. I think John tells us this was not what we had thought was going to happen. We'll all hit moments like that where, no, this was not part of the plan. This was not supposed to happen. In fact, the exact opposite was supposed to happen. That we stay, we stick around. It's not like those disciples we're going to talk about here in Luke 24, didn't you know he died? It's over. That wasn't supposed to happen. It obviously wasn't what I thought it was. |
| Courtney Rich: | 21:44 | I love that her relationship and just how much she loves the Lord and I imagine that connection, that personal experience, that bond and that bound her to him, that even though it's not what she expected and he's gone and she probably thought she had more time with him than they had. That connection was so strong. Her testimony of him so strong that she stayed, even when there was the unknown, it was because of that personal experience. I imagine as I just think of my own experiences with the Lord, I'm like, that's something that changes you. |
| John Bytheway: | 22:20 | I'm looking at John 20 where you took us. It always was amazing to me. And I have to remember, these gospels were written later. You read John 29 as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead Yeah. And you're like, where have you guys been? Haven't you been listening? They had that, oh yeah, he said that, didn't he? When the gospels were actually written, like you said, I want to read verse 10, then the disciples went away. First they ran there and then they went away unto their own home. Verse 11. But Mary stood without, at the sepulchre, weeping, she stayed, as you said, I'm going to mark those now because I really like that idea as they, huh. And then they went away. But Mary stayed. |
| Courtney Rich: | 23:13 | We have the moments too, and we'll talk more about the disciples, the forgetfulness that we sometimes have that's so relatable. Like how many times do we have to be told certain things? Those are the two words that I have underlined in 11. Mary stood, she stayed. And what does that mean? I think about her and I think about her personal experience that I've had my own that really changed my life. For most of my adult |

life actually I struggled with depression and anxiety from about the age of 18. Not something I think most people would look at when they take a glance at social media. And for many years, even the people in my closest circle were very unaware of what I was experiencing. And definitely something that it just wasn't talked about very much as I was going through it. You're trying to find peace and solutions to how I was feeling,

24:01 And mine kind of just felt tangled and confused a lot of times. Feeling happy felt impossible sometimes. And I wondered what was wrong with me, but truly like the darkest moments I would cry out to my heavenly father asking to feel him. Most of the time, honestly I couldn't. And to be frank, it felt disappointing. I was disappointed in him. I was disappointed in myself. I thought for many years, like I think I'm doing everything right. I'm trying so hard. What's wrong with me that I can't feel him and see him the way others did. During this time, I graduated college, I got married, I was working in media consulting. I started a family. My trials didn't go away because I was praying and hoping that they would get better. And I started the cake journey throughout all of that. It was interesting when I started Cake by Courtney, not long into it I started getting called an influencer.

24:54 We hear that term more and more and I was like, oh, that's not something I expected. But I definitely had to start thinking about like what kind of influence did I want to be? And I would get questions about my family and even my faith. I kind of wrestled with it because during that time I actually was having a really big kind of internal battle and some of my darkest days as I struggled understanding my self-worth. And this is in my thirties, like I was about 36 at the time and I really didn't know what my relationship was with the Savior and if he saw me because I was still battling and fighting my demons, trying to plead for his light in my life, for my trial to be lifted. And I still very much felt alone and unseen by him. And I was trying to figure it out.

25:39 And I was in this moment of like, really, I've got to figure this out because I need to know for myself, for my kids, for my family. And it was interesting right around that same time as life would have it, I got invited to attend a women's conference. It was kind of a small intimate one. And there was one challenge, kind of one requirement to be a part of it and to go was to study the life of Christ. So you may remember when [President Nelson](#) shared that he spent some time and invited others. I think he started with the young single adults and then the youth and gave that invitation to many to go through the topical guide and read all the scriptures of Jesus Christ. I said, okay, I'm going all in

on this. And for the entire summer I read every single one of those scriptures prayed every night that I would be able to feel him and see him in my life.

26:32 Of course I wanted to be healed. I wanted my mind to be fixed, but ultimately I wanted to feel him. And that was something that I really struggled with. So I went to that retreat. I listened to those speakers, I prayed. I just hoped for a moment where maybe I don't know, the clouds would part and angels would come down, I don't know, you kind of like, I need this moment. And nothing was happening. I was two days into this retreat and I remember thinking to myself, wow, okay, maybe this gospel isn't for me. The very last day, very last speaker, I'm in the very back of the room by myself actually. And I heard the word so clearly and it was, there's a place for you. I need you, I need you. I remember feeling speechless and looking around like, did anybody else hear that?

27:20 I'd never had an experience like that. I haven't since. It was soft, but it was very clear it was Christ. And he did see me and he did know me after all those years of being angry and upset towards heavenly Father and Jesus Christ like they still wanted me. And it was this moment of like, no, I wasn't healed. All of a sudden my trials just didn't go away. But that burden I had been feeling and carrying for so long didn't quite seem so heavy. I just remember having this like new sense of hope. Truly this sense of change came over me. This very personal experience with Jesus Christ that I just had made me feel different. It made me feel changed. My whole identity, my whole purpose even felt changed. And I wonder if that's how Mary felt. Where then she goes and she follows him and she's with him and she's ministering to him.

28:19 As I read about her getting up before dawn and running to the tomb and she ran to tell Simon and John and she stayed at the tomb and she did that because she loved him and she was forever changed because of her experience with him. I just imagine she couldn't even picture herself without him near. So she was still so earnestly seeking him and waiting for him. I think of my own experience and I think, yeah, that's me. I am earnestly seeking him whenever I can because I want to feel that presence with me as often and as much as I can in my life.

Hank Smith: 28:57 Courtney, what you just told us about, that's important. I can't imagine how many of our listeners are going, that's me. I've been struggling with my own internal battle for years and years and yet you had that experience. John, do you remember Joseph Smith? Everyone is telling him you didn't have that

experience. You may think you did, but you did not have it. He responds with, I had seen a light. And in the midst of that light I saw two personages and they did, I love this, in reality, speak to me. He said, people are persecuting me and telling me I didn't have this experience. And I bet both of you can quote this, I knew it. I knew that God knew it and I could not deny it. So Courtney, I see you. I see Mary in that same way. Listen, he may have died and I may be confused, but I had my experience with him. Hmm. So I'm staying.

John Bytheway: 29:56

I feel like so many of our listeners are going to relate to Courtney's story. We have some pretty amazing scholars on here, Hank, but many of our listeners are maybe thinking I'm just me, member of the anonymous fourth ward and the anonymous stake and nobody knows me.

Hank Smith: 30:17

How do you get in that ward, John? That's a

John Bytheway: 30:19

Yeah, I moved a lot of records there. Yeah. Yeah. For Courtney to mention that, I feel like there's so many who may go, oh, he sees me too. Yeah, he sees you and you're needed. There's a place for you. And the Savior sees every single one of us and suddenly all the stations and the degrees or whatever go away. He sees every individual. What a beautiful message. That's a very personal experience. Thanks for sharing that with us.

Courtney Rich: 30:53

You look at her experience and how she was changed and I never thought I'd have a moment like that. I went through so many years feeling like that wasn't going to happen to me. What would that look like for me? I can look back. It's easy to connect the dots when you look back. I just see how even through cake and all this journey, even in the last decade, he's found me in the kitchen. He has come to me and he was there all along. Really spending time with him and the scriptures and learning of him has taught me that he lives taught me that he is a part of our story each day here. How important that is for us to have a witness of that because how meaningful that is. You know, we can read about these stories and learn so much, but there's a part where he's hearing our stories and how impactful that is to see him with us right here in our midst. But I know it can be hard and I really struggled being able to see that for a long time. My heart goes out to anyone who's feeling that way right now. And I love that Mary teaches us just stay. Just stay. Keep seeking.

Hank Smith: 32:02

Stay with it.

Courtney Rich: 32:03

Yeah,

Hank Smith:	32:05	The Come, Follow Me Manual has this two sentences. Most of us have not seen Jesus Christ as the prophet Joseph Smith did. But we can know as he did that the Savior lives. And your story Courtney reminded me, he knows our successes and struggles. He will help us in times of need.
Courtney Rich:	32:26	Amen. Looking at John 20, we know that she was then visited by two angels who asked why weepest thou. And after that she says, you know, if you've taken my Lord, I don't know where they've laid him, she turns away, she's not looking at the angels. But then she looks back and she sees Jesus. Quickly learns back. You know it says she doesn't recognize him.
Hank Smith:	32:53	Yeah. Doesn't know who he is. Yeah.
Courtney Rich:	32:55	And you're thinking, wait a second, wait, we just talked about this personal experience. She must know him so well. How did she not know him? And you guys can probably speak to this better than I can. But I'm just kind of imagining as I close my eyes here and I think about this Mary who is so sad, if I have tears in my eyes because I'm a crier, so I would like have tears in my eyes and if she has her covering on her head, if she looks and she sees a a man there, she maybe quickly looked back, maybe that was custom of the time. I don't know. But that's kind of what I'm just assuming. So she doesn't know it's him. She looks back to where her sight was the opposite direction. Jesus says to her, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She says, sir, if thou has borne him hence tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away.
	33:46	And then in verse 16, Jesus saith unto her, Mary and she turned herself and sayeth unto him Rabboni, which is to say master. So she's not looking at him when he says Mary and he calls her by name and that's when she knows like she knows his voice. She knows that he knows her as well. Like I love that relationship there. Not only does she hear her name, she knows that voice, but she also knows him so well that she knows He knows her by name. I love that moment between them. When I started to really earnestly seek him and spend time in the scriptures learning about his life, trying to listen to his words and follow him, it was then that I really knew his voice in my own life and that I could recognize him. I think that's why I really was able to have that moment in the back of the room by myself at this conference because I really had poured everything into him. I felt so desperate at the time to know him and to know that he knew me. I imagine it was Mary's personal experience with him that time serving him and ministering to him, learning from him and of him and witnessing of him that caused her to turn

instantly when he said her name Mary, because she not only knew his voice but she also knew he knew her by name.

- Hank Smith: 35:22 We realize the scriptures are in black and white, but we have to read them in color. That moment changes everything I mean not just her life but her entire world. Our entire world here. The first conversation of the risen Lord, like you said, she kind of represents all of us. Sad and disappointed, confused, where's his body? Someone took away his body. And then the fact that he doesn't say who he is right off the bat tells me a little bit about him. Why are you crying? Are you looking for someone? you think, right, you think that she might be... so I just wonder if it's a little of his personality is setting up this perfect moment.
- Courtney Rich: 36:12 And it was such a perfect moment. It really just was so beautiful as I imagine it playing out. As I was thinking about it and Mary turns from the Lord. She knows that there's a man there and she turns away from him. It just kind of made me think of even our human nature and mortality, that there are moments in our lives that we are going to maybe turn away from the Lord. That there are moments that we won't be looking at him. There are going to be setbacks or doubts or questions or challenges that we may find ourselves that we have turned away from the Lord. But how neat is it? There's three words turned herself back that he provides a way that this great plan of salvation, his atoning sacrifice allows us, gives us this gift of repentance that we are always able to turn back to him and to recognize him because he is a God of many chances and he doesn't turn away from us.
- Hank Smith: 37:11 Courtney, how have I never seen this before? John, why do our guests do this to us? I feel so foolish. It's right in front of me. Courtney says she's no expert, here she is showing me things I've never seen before. Courtney, we can have experiences that are so painful that we turn away. It's so hard. And then he calls to us and look what she does. She turned around, she turned to him. I'm looking at these other Christian standard Bible translation turning around. What a lesson. You know, whatever reason Mary's turned around, we often turn away and the Lord, turn around, come back to me. That's beautiful.
- Courtney Rich: 37:56 Made me actually think too of Isaiah 43 verses one through five. I just have a couple of the lines written down because again, just that personal relationship of turn back to me, like you said, he calls to her, he calls her by name. And in Isaiah 43, some of my favorite scriptures fear not. I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by name. Thou art mine, I will be with thee. Skipping ahead thou wast precious in my sight. I have loved thee. Fear not I am with thee. And I just love how that describes that

connection and that relationship when he calls Mary by name and truly each of us that thee thou that is you he is talking to. And as you read that fear not I have redeemed you. I have called you Courtney Rich by name. Thou art mine. I will be with you.

38:47 As we insert ourselves into these scriptures, it's no longer he's there in the scriptures, no we put ourselves there and he's with us now. He lives. If you go to D&C 110 and in verse four, when the Lord appears to Joseph and Oliver, he introduces himself, I am the first and the last. I am he who liveth. I am he who was slain. I'm your advocate with the Father. And in the Living Christ, we solemnly testify that his life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the firstborn of the father, the only begotten son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world. This is so important. This is how he's often introducing himself. He was with us from the beginning and he will be with us until the end. He's not just in our story, he's actually actively a part of our story and how important it is to know that he has known us that long from the beginning until the end.

39:50 And I love that word advocate. Actually during Christmas time we've got a wooden round centerpiece that has little openings for candles to put around. And there's 25 and each circle has one of the names of Christ on it. And I asked my kids to pick their favorite name. I'm like, look at all the names of Christ, which one is your favorite? And my son Westin, who's 16, he quickly picked out Advocate. And I said, okay, so why were you drawn to that one? Why is that your favorite? He told me how he thinks about my brother. So his uncle Chris, my brother is an attorney. He just said, I just think of Chris how hard he works for his clients. He works nonstop. He's trying to keep families together. He's doing everything he can to help these people. And then Westin said, I just imagine Jesus doing that for me. He's going to do everything he can to help me. He's going to because he does know us so well. And as we get to know him, I think we understand that even more. He knows us since the beginning. He knows mortality is hard, but he's promised that he'll always be there. As we wait upon him and we seek him, we'll find him and we'll see how he's there for each of us.

John Bytheway: 41:11 Do you know what else I love about this is verse 15. She supposing him to be the gardener. And I thought, how often have we thought, why isn't the Savior here? Why isn't he helping me? Actually he was right there. She just didn't recognize him. And then as you've both talked about, she turned herself around. She turned herself and saw him. Perhaps

when we think he's not there, he really is. We're just not seeing him.

- Hank Smith: 41:40 I think [Hugh B. Brown](#) would love that verse, right? I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to be. I have to do a quick shout out to my friend Ashley Stone. I don't know if either of you know Ashley, but she runs the Come Back podcast and I just thought of that with what Courtney taught us. Turning around, you can come back. I love it. I love what Ashley does. I love what Courtney has just showed us. Courtney, what do we do next?
- Courtney Rich: 42:10 Okay, I'm going to switch gears and I'm going to go over to Luke 24. Because we get the story about Cleopas and a friend or another traveler, they don't mention his name, but they're walking the road to Emmaus and as they're walking, they're talking about the events of what's just happened, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and Jesus appears. So maybe he just walked up right behind them and joined them. But again, they don't know that it's him. And I am again imagining maybe The Chosen has helped me visualize a lot of things. And so I'm thinking, okay, does he have a hood on? Or they're just so focused on their conversation, there's so many analogies here. The way we can also apply it to our lives, the things that they're focused on and thinking about and what they're looking for versus what they should be looking for. But either way, they don't know it's him. They start telling him what's going on.
- Hank Smith: 43:02 They're like, do you live under a rock?
- Courtney Rich: 43:04 Yeah, yeah.
- Hank Smith: 43:05 He's like, what's going on?
- Courtney Rich: 43:08 Where have you been? So they start sharing those and this verse stood out to me and one word specifically, this is Luke 24, verse 21. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done, I got stuck on that word, trusted, past tense. We trusted, I sat there for a minute, for a while, for the weeks even that I've been studying and thinking about this trusted. Like did they stop trusting when that didn't go the way they had expected? Where were their minds going? How frustrated were they? What were they expecting to happen? I get nothing like that had ever happened before, so they probably didn't even know. But how this applies to us and how quickly sometimes, like we even mentioned earlier, I mean we all probably have our whole life planned out.

- 44:11 We have expectations. We know what we want to happen. Even when we're praying for something to happen, we're probably thinking, or maybe this is just me, but I'm like, heavenly father, I really could use this situation to unfold like this. I've come up with a great plan for it to unfold the way I need it to unfold. So if you could just make that happen, that'd be great. And then it doesn't happen those ways and we're kind of at a loss sometimes. There had been something on my heart that I had been talking to the Lord about for a couple years, actually a couple years ago. He had, I finally got an answer and this was something that was going to impact our family in a very big way, a very big decision that we needed to make. And it was a decision with an action that we didn't quite know what was going to happen after that.
- 44:59 The whole picture wasn't there, but it was, you need to do this. Then you're kind of like, all right, well I hope more answers come, but we're still kind of waiting on the other side of what those answers were supposed to be. But I got confirmation in several ways that we were supposed to make this big decision and change our lives in this very big way. We've been in this waiting period for over a year now for kind of the other side of the answers. You know, I felt like I'm in this space of where I'm trying to hold everything up. The weight on my shoulders is feeling heavier than it's ever felt. I was talking to my mom recently. I just said to her, I don't know what else I can do. I feel like I am doing all the the things I'm supposed to.
- 45:51 Maybe I'm not praying for the right thing or asking the right thing, so I'm changing my prayer to Heavenly Father. What am I supposed to be asking for? What am I not seeing? What am I doing wrong? I'm going through all these things and my mom just paused for a minute after I was talking and she said, but have you asked him to take it from you? All that weight? Have you asked him to take it from you? No, no, I hadn't. That thought hadn't even crossed my mind and that brought the idea of trust, the level of trust that I have in my Savior to a whole new level for me. Because yes, I trust and trusted him enough to make the decision and kind of guide my family on this decision, the confirmations that we've had. I've continued to trust that things are going to work out, but as I feel the burdens heavier on my shoulders, have I really trusted that I could give it to him and turn it over to him and what does that look like?
- 46:51 I think of the disciples in the boat rowing. How many hours was it? Nine? And I'm at the point where I feel like I actually can't row anymore. I actually don't feel that I can do that. I need him to take it from me. It's just been something that's just been

sitting with me. This idea of, okay, what does trust really look like? Not the past tense, but being in the moments of the waiting and the rowing and trusting not only that things will work out, but that he can actually take it and hold that burden with me and make it lighter for me.

Hank Smith: 47:30 Wow. I love Luke 24. It's this, I have a very unmet expectation. Jesus is going to come into Jerusalem, he's going to throw off the Romans, he's going to redeem Israel and we're going to be back in our own government. And he doesn't just not do that, he does the exact opposite of that and he dies. So disappointed as they're walking back. You know, we thought it was him. I really thought he was the guy. Obviously he's not. He's dead and Jesus is just walking with them. It's just such a beautiful moment. He says, you fools. They gotta be, Hey, I thought you didn't know anything about this.

John Bytheway: 48:21 Yeah. Hank, I've heard you talk beautifully about this story. I know you love this story because of the unmet expectation, which is like, welcome to life. Life is I expected this, and how come I'm getting this, so often? And for me, one of my favorite verses is verse 32. There's one funny reason, but there's another more profound reason. One funny reason is they said, Hey, wait a minute, did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way? And I just like that by the way's in there. That's the funny reason. The other reason is I feel like most of my life, I have not known the Lord was present in the moment, but I looked back and went, Hey, wait a minute. I think the Lord was helping me and I didn't even know it at the time. This is what they're saying. Wait a minute, did our heart not burn within us while he talked with us by the way. It had already happened and they're going, Hey, he was right there with us. I didn't realize it, and that's the story of my life. Almost every book I ever wrote is called What I Wish I'd known because I'm so slow.

Hank Smith: 49:29 And Courtney, that fits what you just said. I have expectations. John frequently reminds me that it's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not faith in outcomes, not faith in, Hey, I got my plan going here. You're going to roll this out the way I think you are. That's what I have my faith in. It's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And sometimes we just slip into the no, no, no faith in outcomes.

Courtney Rich: 49:55 Yeah. Even if moments, I trust that this is going to work, but even if it doesn't, I am still here. I will not leave you. I will still have faith and I will still trust. Those moments are hard. Those are the ones that really I think refine us and push us because it

would be easy to just say, no, that was not fair. That was not how I expected. I'm done. And he pushes us and it's hard. And through life's experiences, the more you have these moments and you see the outcomes whenever they come tomorrow, the next month, year, years down the road, you realize, okay, no, it's his plan was better than I could have ever imagined. And that answer was worth waiting for. Did our hearts not burn within us? We could just go to this next part about the disciples too, because this whole idea of how did we forget that ?

50:50 How did we forget that? How many times the Lord needs to remind us? Sometimes subtly, sometimes not so subtly, even in we look in D&C six when he's talking to Oliver Cowdery and Oliver had already received such a personal divine manifestation of the truth of the prophet's testimony, respecting the plates, but he's again questioning his role in the work and in section six, verse 23, did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God? It actually makes me feel a little better. I'm not the only one who needs reminding these great disciples, Oliver, you know what? Each of us can turn our, not maybe not our whole path away from the Lord, but sometimes even just our mind and our focus gets turned away. These reminders are like, hold on, let me turn you back in the right direction. Let me help you remember that you have had these experiences that I've been here all along.

Hank Smith: 51:54 Courtney, I'm glad you brought this story up. John has a great thought about it, John, you know what I'm going to say?

John Bytheway: 51:59 Yeah. And it was actually Joseph Fielding McConkie taught us that Oliver got a revelation to tell him he'd already received a revelation.

Hank Smith: 52:12 It's funny, Courtney, that we have to get revelation to remind us. We talked about this.

John Bytheway: 52:18 Yeah.

Courtney Rich: 52:18 Yeah. It's also comforting to know that okay, yeah, we're going to have those moments, but the Lord is here to also remind us. It's easy to forget or even doubt the promptings. I think that's even something I've seen more so in my life. I will have a prompting, you will later doubt those promptings or the whisperings that we've had from the Spirit. Actually, when we were called to the Young Women Advisory Council, President Freeman gave us each a little notebook, nothing special as far as how it looks, and she called it the Book of Evidences. She said,

over the next five years during this calling, I hope that you will write down where you see evidences of the Lord in your life. I have been writing in that book the last couple years. It's amazing how you forget things and how peaceful and comforting it can be to reread those accounts.

53:14

But I had one as I talked about this big decision and and these things that are going on right now in our life and in our family, and we're waiting for this other side of the answer. When that initial guidance came and what to do came, I had three witnesses, very clear experiences that confirmed to me that that's what we needed to do. Fast forward to today, almost two years from that initial prompting and a year since making that decision, the rest of it hasn't come. Like I said, I was recently feeling discouraged even before I was talking to my mom about it. I was starting to question even my own divine experiences. I had written them down, but as this was happening the other day, the thought came to me. The whispering said, write down what you know. I opened my book of evidences and on a new page, I just made a list of things I know, I know that God lives.

54:15

I know Jesus Christ lives. I know that they love me. I know that they see me. And I wrote down again the experiences that I had that led me to the decision with my family that we needed to make. And then how interesting, like a week later, we're getting into D&C 20 and in verse 17 it says the things we know to be true. They're talking about the things that have happened and that are going to happen. And because these things happened, we know these things to be true. That peace and comfort came back over me. I know that these things are true. I've had my evidences, I've got my book of evidences, and because I know these things are true, I know that I've had this experience. I know God lives. I know my Savior loves me. I know that things will work out and I don't know what that looks like, but I hold strong to the things that I know right now. Those truths give me strength and hope and remind me that I'm not alone and President Nelson on several occasions, I believe, has encouraged us to write down our spiritual experiences so that when we have our hearts burn within us, we're not saying to ourselves, oh yeah, didn't our hearts burn within us? We can really go back to it and remember it and have those evidences in our lives that we're trying to pay more attention to.

Hank Smith:

55:39

And they're pretty typical, aren't they? I knew it the whole time. I never even doubted for a second, just to give you a second witness of what you taught us earlier. They kind of, like Mary, go back to Jerusalem. They were on their way out of Jerusalem, like make this, like their faith, their church, their belief. They're

walking away. Jesus stops them as they're walking away. Are you sure you want to leave? Let's talk for a minute. And they immediately, I think some translations say that very hour they turned around and went back.

John Bytheway:	56:15	Love that. That's verse 33. They rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the 11 gathered together and them that were with them saying, the Lord has risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon. I mean, here comes that, oh, this is not what we expected, but this is awesome.
Hank Smith:	56:34	This is even better, right?
John Bytheway:	56:36	This is better.
Courtney Rich:	56:38	Exactly. Usually that's how it ends up. It is better than we expected. And how grateful I am for the God of many chances. For the many times that he's willing to remind me that he's been there. Remind me and help me turn back to him.
Hank Smith:	56:59	Coming up in part two of this episode.
Courtney Rich:	57:02	When you reach up for the Lord's power in your life with the same intensity that a drowning person has when grasping and gasping for air, power from Jesus Christ will be yours.



- John Bytheway: 00:00 Welcome to part two with Courtney Rich.
- Courtney Rich: 00:03 Later in Luke 24 and verse 45 talks about then open he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. That's where he wants us to go. He talks about the scriptures as he's on the road to Emmaus. As he's talking about Moses here again, he is like that they may understand the scriptures. He's reminding us if we have questions, if we have doubts, here's where you need to go. It's the scriptures and I will help enlighten your mind as you're doing that. I just love that reminder too. And the pattern that he's teaching us of how to learn, how to gain a witness of him, how to have our minds enlightened.
- Hank Smith: 00:45 It seems like with both of these groups in Luke 24, these two and then the 12, he uses scriptures to bring them around. With the two on the road to Emmaus it says, let's talk through it says he beginning at Moses. That's a wave us back, right? let's start with Genesis and how about we walk through all the scriptures and help you reevaluate your choices.
- Courtney Rich: 01:08 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 01:08 Courtney, I love what President Freeman had you do with evidences. I remember a talk that [Elder Holland](#) gave, a classic talk because all of his talks seem to be classic. It was called Lord I Believe. But the point he made in the talk was you always start with what you know. Boy, that helped me tremendously as a bishop. When somebody would come in and I'm having this question, I'd be, I'm going to try to help you answer that. But first let's talk about some things that you know, that list gets longer and longer to use a line from a hymn, it will surprise you what the Lord has done when you start talking about what you know. Thank you for showing me that in section 20. I've never seen that by these things we know. And here comes this boom, boom, boom list. I think President Eyring had said at one point, that's what a journal is.

02:00 It's not for your trips and your trophies, it's document the hand of God in your life. And then you have this place you can go, like you did Courtney, here's my book of evidences. And you go back there and say, oh yeah. But there's one other thing I wanted to add because it's Easter-ish, but it's Book of Mormon. You know how these guys are like, hey wait, he did say that, didn't he? You know this, Jesus comes back and he's sitting with Nephi three in third Nephi and says, uh, did you write down that thing that Samuel the Lamanite said? And what was it? It was about the resurrection, right? It was very Easter. Do you remember that some of the saints that slept arose and appeared unto many? Do you remember how I told you to write that down? So I think that's fascinating because it's about this very topic. When we were back in John, they didn't know the scripture that he would rise again. It's like what? You didn't know that?

Hank Smith: 02:56 Uh, and he has to just like Courtney said, remind us.

Courtney Rich: 03:00 Just remind us. How patient he is with us. I love how chapter 24, Luke 24 ends as their minds are open to the understanding. They're in the scriptures. Christ reminds them preach repentance and a remission of sins. You're my witnesses now. And he reminds them of that. Ye are witnesses of these things. Not that just happened right here, but this whole journey that we've been on together and he blesses them. And after he leaves, I love this example of discipleship and what it means. They were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. That's what it means to be a witness moving on and sharing that and praising him. And they returned with great joy. So we end with that in 24. But then I think about chapter 20 over in John. This is one of my favorites. Because I think this also helped me have a better understanding of what it means to take upon his name, to witness of him, what it really means to be a disciple when we have that moment where we're changed.

04:08 We have these personal experiences with him. We are connected with him and we're like, all right, what does that mean? Now what do I do? There's something just so relatable about this to me. This is when Simon Peter, he is like, let's go fishing. Christ had come to them. He's gone again. I just imagine him being like, I don't, maybe I don't know what to do now. they go back to what they know and they're back in the boat. They're fishing and they're not catching anything. And that sounds pretty familiar, doesn't it? They see a man at the shore and they don't know who it is. The man says, and this is Jesus, but says, cast your net to the other side. John says to Simon, it's the Lord.

Hank Smith:	04:55	I think it's him. Yeah.
Courtney Rich:	04:56	Yeah, I think it's him, right? And Simon, you also just love that he jumps out into the water and again running, swimming as fast as he can to him. But it's the part later. So this is in verses 15 through 17. Peter's having the conversation with Christ. He is saying, lovest thou me more than these? And he saith unto him, yea Lord. Thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, feed my lambs. He saith to him again. The second time, Simon son of Jonas lovest thou me? And he saith unto him, yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He said unto him, feed my sheep. And then a third time they have this same interaction, that same thing. And Peter seems a little like sad because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me. And he is like, Lord thou knowest all things.
	05:50	Thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, feed my sheep. And President Freeman was teaching this one time and I just loved how she was, You're not a fisherman anymore. You are my disciple. Truly Simon, the other disciples, Mary, their mission had changed. Changed because years before that moment they decided to walk the covenant path. They decided to walk with Christ. And I'm sure they stumbled and they felt inadequate, but they kept walking. They chose to stay. They chose to follow Jesus Christ just like Mary did. Just like you and I can. The idea of, yeah, you are actually a changed person when these moments happen as you become a disciple of Christ. I'm a big sports fan and I played basketball growing up. And so when I started high school, we had just moved from Utah to California and I tried out for the basketball team.
	06:42	I had no friends and I just thought, okay, I'll do this and that would be a great way to make friends and I love basketball and I made the team and kind of that worry about making friends went away. But as I was on that team, you have this sudden sense of belonging. You put on that jersey, mine was the Agora Chargers. There was a big lightning bolt, it was blue and yellow and I felt like I was a part of something bigger, something important, something I wanted to live up to. I wanted to represent in a really positive way. I think about my discipleship, my moment. Do we take on the name of Christ like we would a sports team? Do we identify with Christ like we would with groups we're involved with, whether that's friends or family or the athletics, celebrities, musicians?
	07:27	You think about all the influences we have in our lives. President Lund shared this quote in one of his conference talks just a couple years ago. He said, your discipleship isn't just a slogan on

a t-shirt, it has become a part of your life, purposefully lived for others. So you go home and you do that, be that. Carry the [spiritual momentum](#) into the rest of your life. Was talking about people's experiences with FSY. Truly, I love that emphasis that discipleship isn't merely that superficial expression or a fleeting trend, but it's deeply ingrained in the way that we live. And it's characterized by our purpose, how we serve others, what are we working towards? And when I look at Mary and the disciples in these events that we've been talking about today, I think we learn so much about what it means to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. What it means to have these personal experiences with him and how in those intimate moments in our lives it can lead to change within us. That's actually so profound that we want to witness of him. We don't have to just read like we talked about. He's here in our stories right now.

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| Hank Smith: | 08:37 | It gives me a sense of you're going to be okay. Yes, it's painful right now and don't forget you signed up for this. Losses will be made up to you. I know you're hurting once you see what I see, you'll know why. |
| John Bytheway: | 08:55 | More than anything else. The resurrection is that message. He's a deliverer, he's a redeemer, he's a restorer. And everything is going to be made right including death. Thanks for that Hank. |
| Hank Smith: | 09:10 | Courtney. I like that you pointed out in this story that listen, you don't have an experience with the resurrected Lord and then just be like, well I'm going to go back to what I was doing before. No, everything is different now. You don't get to go backwards. I use that story with those in my class who return from a mission. You don't just go back to fishing. Everything has changed. This isn't the end. This is the beginning. |
| Courtney Rich: | 09:36 | Yeah. Makes me circle back to Mary when she's in the tomb. She's there, she's waiting, she's staying, she's seeking after Christ. She's still like, no, I'm still a part of this. You're still a part of me. I don't know what's next, but I'm here ready to wait and see what's next. That's what I am looking for and reminds us to turn our eyes, our hearts, our lives over to him. As I looked at these stories and these verses, I just all of a sudden saw my life for me, becoming a witness of him and having a witness that he lives today and my story, it all started because I needed that personal relationship with him. I needed that personal experience and I was desperate to find it. And as I did, as I dove into his life and trying to better understand him, I was able to better see his love for me and understand how much he can strengthen and heal me. |

	10:45	President Nelson testified, I love this quote too. The more you learn about the Savior, the easier it is to trust in his mercy, his infinite love and his strengthening, healing and redeeming power. I just also testify that that is so true. I saw that change in my life. The more that I learned about him, really understood him and saw him and his stories and his teachings, that trust has become easier. I'm still learning that trust. I'm still learning how to turn things over to him. But what a difference it has made in my life. It's profound. It really is. The way that he can change your spirit, your outlook, your understanding, and maybe not take all the burdens away but help lighten the load because he's carrying it with us side by side.
Hank Smith:	11:34	And that's the message of Easter. There's a confidence that comes that really, I don't know if you can get in any other way, I'm not talking to live with confidence in yourself, but a piece that comes, Elder Scott said that the difficulties of life are set against a background of a very beautiful thing. The trials are the clouds, but the Lord is the sky. He's there.
John Bytheway:	12:07	Paul talks about being settled and grounded and I just, those are good words for this understanding of the Savior's presence. There was a classic seminary video. Do you remember the young lady comes in and just doesn't feel worthy and the bishop does the coolest thing. He says, look outside, what do you see? And she says, I see a tree and some cars. And he says, I look out, I see the same thing. And the bishop says, I want you to look at this picture on the wall of the Savior and don't take your eyes off of it until we both see the same thing. You remember this video Hank, and he says, you see someone who's so good, he wouldn't want you as one of his children. And she kind of nods her head and he says, well, let me tell you the Savior that I know. And he says, I see someone who is so good that he would love to have you as one of his daughters. What you just said, Courtney, the more we read about him as President Nelson said, the more hope we have. We start to discover what he's really like and how merciful and forgiving and welcoming he really is. If you're feeling like you're not good enough, you need to read more about him and read more about what he's really like. You'll start to see what this girl saw in the Bishop's office.
Hank Smith:	13:30	Courtney, so far you've shown us how to navigate extreme difficulty and we know we have listeners who are saying, this is me. Whether it be mental health problems, death of loved ones, unmet hopes and dreams. And John speak to this as well. How do you see all that helping me? Who's out there listening, going, what do I do now? I want that. I want what you have. I want the confidence, I want the peace.

Courtney Rich:	14:06	<p>Something that I didn't realize I wasn't doing. I mean I was, I was kind of doing the checklist of things growing up. The things that I thought you needed to do, keep the commandments and check this off the list, check this off the list. What I failed at for so long was creating the personal part of that relationship and understanding the why of that relationship beyond the checklist or the commandments or the things that I was being taught that I thought I was just supposed to do to do. You know, it's why I love the For the Strength of Youth guide now. The way that it really talks about the why behind all the things that we are taught, helping our youth to really have an understanding and a connection to the Savior because that gives all of this purpose, even if it is the checklist items.</p>
	15:01	<p>I think the difference maker was one, there was such a desperation I felt to know my Savior and feel like I was kind of at the last leg of the race and I didn't know what else. And here he was giving me an invitation to get to know him and I took it. Really spending that time focusing on him and learning of him and his life and his character rounded out to where I had this greater understanding that he knew who I was and that he loves me because it was that time I took to get to know him. And I understood that greater love that he had for me and I could hear his voice.</p>
Hank Smith:	15:42	<p>It sounds backwards to say that your experience there Courtney was a blessing, but it can be a blessing for the Lord to put us in situations where we only have one choice. It's him. Where, I've tried everything else. This is my last hope. And then like you said, it's desperation. Lord save me.</p>
Courtney Rich:	16:09	<p>Yeah.</p>
Hank Smith:	16:09	<p>As Peter would say.</p>
Courtney Rich:	16:11	<p>President Nelson gave a talk called drawing on the power of Jesus Christ in our lives. This was back in 2017 and he was sharing the story of the woman with the issue of blood suffering for 12 years. And then when she's near Christ, she has such great faith in the Savior. She's like, if I touch his clothes, I'll be made whole. He says, this faithful focused woman needed to stretch as far as she could to access his power. Her physical stretching was symbolic of her spiritual stretching. Many of us have cried out from the depths of our heart a variation of this woman's words. If I could spiritually stretch enough to draw the Savior's power into my life, I would know how to handle my heart wrenching situation. I would know what to do and I would have the power to do it. Now this next part, the best part, when</p>

you reach up for the Lord's power in your life with the same intensity that a drowning person has when grasping and gasping for air, power from Jesus Christ will be yours.

17:09 When the Savior knows you truly want to reach up to him. When he can feel that the greatest desire of your heart is to draw his power into your life, you'll be led by the Holy Ghost to know exactly what you should do. I thought it was so interesting that President Nelson pointed out when the Savior knows you truly want to reach up to him when the Savior knows because he knows our intentions. He knows we are sitting in our hard right now. He knows how hard we're working and what we've been trying to do to overcome these obstacles. He has not left that. But he can also feel it. He is prepared and he knows the moment where you are grasping and gasping for air and he will come in even if it's at that very last moment like it has been for me.

John Bytheway: 17:59 The verse that came to mind was that we just covered a few weeks ago, section 19 verse 23, learn of me, listen to my words, walk in the meekness of my spirit, and there's the focus part and you will have peace. When you see a scripture that tells you where to find something, then by implication it also tells you where you won't find it right? You'll find peace in me. In other words, you won't find it in social media, you won't find it in popularity, you won't find it in fame, you won't find it in wealth, you will find it in me.

Hank Smith: 18:34 I was thinking about how we've watched Joseph Smith and the Saints learn line upon line this year. Joseph Smith and Emma Smith are not strangers to heartache. Joseph Smith, the loss of his older brother, Alvin stays with him through his entire life and then they lose child after child, infant after infant, both in miscarriages and then children dying so young. And yet he doesn't know everything. He doesn't know what's going to happen to Alvin. He sees him in the Celestial kingdom. How is that possible?

John Bytheway: 19:14 I marveled, he says. He'd never received the gospel.

Hank Smith: 19:18 So part of maybe dealing with the heartbreak is allowing the Lord to teach you a piece at a time and being patient with that process that you're not going to get it all. But you're going to be given a little. Line upon line, precept on precept, here a little there a little. But it does come as Courtney's taught us today. Courtney, I would like to revisit a couple of things you've said before we let you go. We can't let you off this easy.

John Bytheway:	19:49	Without some cake.
Hank Smith:	19:51	Yeah.
Courtney Rich:	19:51	You know, if we had actually all been together, I would've brought cake. Just by the way, for future reference that thought, if you ever have a repeat guest.
Hank Smith:	19:59	Don't tell me that. Don't tell me that.
John Bytheway:	20:02	We'll take a cake check they call it, right? Yeah.
Courtney Rich:	20:04	There we go. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	20:05	Okay. Courtney, a couple of these things you've already hit, but I would be interested in them and that is some of our listeners, I'm sure many of them struggle with faith. I want to believe, I want to know, I want to be able to say what I hear other people saying. You said this early on when you were struggling, I wanted to feel what they felt and be able to say the things that they say. How do you know those answers when they come? You talked about being in the back of that conference and knowing that answer when it came. How do I recognize that that's real. That's from him.
Courtney Rich:	20:48	That is tricky. Discernment, discerning. Are these just my thoughts? Are these the whisperings of the Spirit? I'll say that moment at that conference was so unique and different for me that I just was so sure of it. There was not even a doubt in my mind. It was the voice of the Lord. It was so powerful and so distinct and so different from anything else. And then from that time on, you know I'm about 42, so the last six years I've really tried to be intentional about listening for his voice. And there have been these moments in my life where I'm like, was that the whisperings? Was that the promptings? I had a funny experience a couple years ago. It was like I just kept getting this feeling that I needed to be attending the temple more often. And I'm just like, I thought in my head oh I can do that later.
	21:42	I'll get to that. And it just kept coming back to me like get to the temple. Get to the temple. And again, I just kept putting it off and putting it off and I'm five minutes away from a temple, which is ridiculous of me to do. And then one Sunday afternoon my mom calls me and she says, Hey, been thinking about you today. And as I was in the stake conference and sitting there, I had this thought for you, this impression and I just can't shake it. And she's like, I just had this impression that I needed to tell

you to go to the temple every week for the next four weeks. I responded with a laugh. I don't, I'm sure she was like, why is she laughing? But in my head I'm thinking, of course here I am not listening to the whisperings of the Spirit, not recognizing that that is the Lord telling me to go to the temple. And what does he do? He goes to my mom.

Hank Smith: 22:33

Goes to your mom.

Courtney Rich: 22:33

Because he is like, I know she'll listen to her mom, if I tell her mom and her mom tells her, she'll go. And I've had a couple moments like that where I've realized I can't risk not listening. So even if this good thought to go to the temple is just my thought, well I'm going to go do it. Even if this thought to text this person I don't know very well from my ward is just my thought, I'm still going to do it and act as if it's a whispering from the Spirit because I can't risk not listening. Because what I want is to be able to hear. I want that veil to be thinner. I want to be able to hear him in the small moments as I do the big moments. And it's something I've talked to my kids a lot about as they are discovering and developing their own testimonies and they are in things and have passions for golf and for dance and there's days that things don't work out and they say to me, but I'm praying but I fasted for this and it didn't work out.

23:34

Is he even there? Does he even want to help me? We've had these discussions of, well yes, but also let's look at all the other small pieces to this. You're looking at this one moment, maybe this big picture that you want to happen. But I'm trying to help them start to see where he is in the little things. At least this is what's helped for me. If I can recognize more the Spirit and the little parts and have the evidences of where he was in my day-to-day, the little mini miracles, the more I've been able or the better I've been able to hear him on some of these bigger things. As I talked about in today's podcast, I was just with Avery at a dance competition and she was very nervous and anxious about doing a solo. And she's done it before, but she had kind of a mishap the last time she did it.

24:24

She was so anxious and we had said prayers and we were walking down the hall and somebody stopped me, recognized me and and we started talking and the lady next to her grabbed her daughter and said, she needs a hug pointing to Avery. This girl gave Avery a hug and they just were like, it's going to be okay. You are going to do great today. They didn't know what she was about to do or what was about to happen. They knew she was dancing. We walked away from that and Avery tugged on me and stopped me in the hall and goes, mom, do you know

what that was? And I said, oh that was so nice. She's like, mom, that was a miracle. That was the Lord. That was his hand telling her to give me a hug. So as we start to connect the dots on those little things, I think they help build up to those bigger moments and we're more aware of them and we recognize them as the Spirit and the Lord.

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| Hank Smith: | 25:18 | As we track them like you talked about with your journal. I think we tell the Lord I want more of these. I will take them seriously. I will hold them sacred. I will write them down. John, what do you think? |
| John Bytheway: | 25:31 | My first thought when you asked the question was go to Alma 32 and 33 where Alma uses this phrase, Even if you can no more than desire to believe and maybe that's where you are. Heavenly father, I want to believe this. But even if you can no more than desire to believe, I love the phrase Alma uses: give place. What's it called Hank? A willful suspension of disbelief. Give place that the word which is Christ can be planted in your heart and watch what happens. I think they use a plant on purpose because you can't rush it. You can't rush a seed. It's the tree of life it tells us later on. And I think you can't rush that either. You plant an apple tree, you don't eat an apple for years. |
| Hank Smith: | 26:18 | Yeah, it's going to be a while. |
| John Bytheway: | 26:20 | It's an exercise in patience and diligence. It's not just plant it but then it's nurturing and patience and diligence. I just say to my kids, then tell the Lord that, tell him I want to believe this. Help my unbelief. Help me keep going. And he's a good tutor. He knows when to give you what. So there's a trust element in there too. |
| Courtney Rich: | 26:42 | Yeah. Yeah. |
| | 26:43 | And that willingness, you know, I think about that. It's in my patriarchal blessing a couple times. The willingness. And I think he knows that. He knows the intentions of our heart. If we've got that willingness, like you said, that desire to try, to experiment, test out some of the things that are mentioned here in the scriptures and in these lessons, test them out, have that willingness and see what can happen as you plant the seed. I just believe he knows our intentions. So when they're pure and they're right and they're focused on him, good things are going to happen when we're trying. Grab a journal, I brought mine, but that's my book of evidences. It's just a little thing and I'm filling it up and it's changed my life the last couple years as I've gone back to it over and over again. And maybe for a while, the |

only evidence or the only truth you know is I know my Savior lives. Maybe that's the only thing. You just keep going back to it. That's okay. That's great. Start with one thing that you know, it doesn't have to be a whole list, don't overwhelm ourselves. But that foundation can be built on one truth and maybe you don't even know that one truth yet. So let's pray. Discover what that one truth may be in your life about the Savior that you can start to build that foundation upon and it's going to grow. That's a promise he makes throughout the scriptures.

Hank Smith:	28:01	I can combine these two things together. My wife and my daughter Madelynn and I were at the temple last week when we came out of there and got in the car, we were all kind of three going. Did that really just happen? Did we really just see the hand of God in a way that was unmistakable? The first thing I did was I have a note on my phone that's my book of evidences. And I went there and added to my experiences, these undeniable blessings that are personalized, the tender mercies of the Lord having lost both of my parents and my older brother. I find that if I want to be close to them, I don't go to the cemetery, I go to the temple.
John Bytheway:	28:48	Exactly Hank.
Hank Smith:	28:50	The cemetery, I go there to pay my respects. But honestly I think my dad would say, what are you doing? Why are you here? Go to the temple. That's where we're going to connect.
John Bytheway:	29:03	I had that happen to me. I went to Wasatch Lawn where my dad was buried and I had that impression, thanks for coming but you want to feel close, go to the temple. And that's where we connect earth with heaven and where families are connected. And I it was kind of one of those of course, yeah. Sorry dad.
Hank Smith:	29:24	Right. Sorry about that. I'll uh,
John Bytheway:	29:26	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	29:27	If anyone out there says, oh I really feel peace at the cemetery, I don't think that's what, we're definitely not saying that. For me personally, when I get myself into the temple, I think this is what I'm looking for. And even then, Courtney, it comes a piece at a time. I'm like, give me the whole thing. Overwhelm me with the angels.
Courtney Rich:	29:46	The parting of the clouds.

Hank Smith:	29:49	Right?
Courtney Rich:	29:49	And I think that's what I thought it was for a long time and I think what I've been tutored on and learning last six, seven years, even throughout the 20 that I felt like I was alone was, it is little by little and it's meant to be little by little because that's how we learn. That's how we really soak it all in. If we were to have everything all at once, I'm not sure it would be as as meaningful or as impactful. It becomes information overload. I think it's these little things that become so meaningful and as you get further along your path and you look back at what has happened and how the Lord has made your path that maybe it was winding and weaving and all these different ways, but you look back and you see the picture that he's painted and it all makes sense.
	30:38	Like you said, I wouldn't take back 20 years of feeling alone and forgotten because the nearly 20 years of that led me to a moment that I will never forget that I am not alone and that my Savior sees me and is with me. And because of all that time and leading up to that moment, I am changed. And I wouldn't ever change that. And looking back, I can see how he's like, hang on just a little bit longer. I'm going to get you to this point where you're making cakes. I'm going to get you to Utah where you start to share it. I'm going to get you to this point where you can be involved in this conference and you're going to learn, just hang on a little bit longer because it's all going to make sense. It's all going to work out. And it does. And sometimes it's a lot longer than we want it to be. A lot longer. Darn it. But it is.
John Bytheway:	31:41	The fourth watch.
Courtney Rich:	31:42	Yeah. But it's going to work out. And he promises that. And he is a god who does not break promises.
Hank Smith:	31:51	Our friend Michael McLean wrote, hold on, the light will come.
John Bytheway:	31:56	Hold on, the light will come. Speaking of baking, when I was in seventh grade and we're signing up for our eighth grade classes and my friends were like, let's take a cooking class. And I thought they were joking and they were going to trick me into taking this class while they all took PE, but they said, let's take this cooking class. And I said, why? And they said, you get to eat. And I was like, oh duh. we made brownies like every day. They were sometimes more like burnt offerings but it was also had a really good girl to boy ratio. There was one table of boys, us, and about six tables of girls. So it was an awesome class. But

I didn't know that halfway through the school year, we would switch to sewing.

32:44 So we were doing needle point and I saved this Hank, I have to find it, but it was on a piece of burlap and I sewed a lion's head with a mane. But I learned something about the needle point that if you look at the backside, you can't tell what in the world that's going to be. Because the threads are crisscrossing everywhere and there's knots and stuff like that. And I gave it to my mom, you know, in eighth grade. She's like, oh that looks so nice. In the garage years later I came across this poem, Elder Maxwell quoted it in a general conference talk. Just that idea came alive to me of the backside of my needle point. So it's not original to Elder Maxwell, but you can find the reference. This is the [poem](#), I memorized it. My life is but a weaving between my God and me. I do not choose the colors. He worketh steadily. Oft times he weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride forget he sees the upper and I the underside. Not till the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly, will God unroll the canvas and explain the reasons why. The dark threads are as needful in the skillful weaver's hands as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern he has planned. A great poem.

Courtney Rich: 34:11 Love that.

John Bytheway: 34:12 We're seeing the underside going what are you doing to me in my life? Or why this thread? Why here, why now? And someday we'll turn it over and we'll see the reasons why.

Hank Smith: 34:26 Courtney, we had joked about something while we were, we had a bit of a break here and I actually want to talk about it because I just thought it was so simple, yet so profound. Occasionally Courtney will get emails from people who tell her that they didn't like her recipe or that something happened in the recipe and they're going to correct it. People do that to us too, John. Like they,

John Bytheway: 34:51 Oh, hardly ever.

Hank Smith: 34:53 Occasionally people don't like the show and they let us know very directly. Courtney said there sometimes are people who will tell her that they changed the recipe and it just didn't work.

Courtney Rich: 35:07 And they're surprised.

John Bytheway: 35:07 Imagine that.

Courtney Rich:	35:08	What?
Hank Smith:	35:10	Yeah. And they want to know what happened.
Courtney Rich:	35:12	I know. I'm trying to troubleshoot. I mean, I will say my Instagram community is the best of the best because they're the most supportive, kind, awesome group of people that choose to join me and I'm so grateful for. The blog is interesting because that's where the recipes are. You'll get comments and reviews. And so I do just kind of giggle sometimes before trying to reply as nicely as I can. When I see the comment of, okay, I tried this recipe, it came out horrible. I changed this to this, I changed this to this. And they're listing all the changes that they made. And I think to myself, well that's not the recipe I wrote. So I don't know what you just baked.
Hank Smith:	35:54	I don't
Courtney Rich:	35:55	But it wasn't what the recipe I gave you. And my hope is I'm not perfect. My recipes aren't always perfect. But the hope is that if you follow it the way it's written, it will work out for you. Thinking about the analogy of the scriptures and the gospel and you know how easy sometimes we do. I mean it's, we are just, the natural man sometimes gets in us and we're like, well I'm just going to tweak this a little bit and then tweak this a little bit and this. And all of a sudden things really aren't working out the way that they've been promised to us or shown to us. And we're thinking why? Well, we didn't follow the recipe the right way and how lucky we are to have, I'm putting my hands to my scriptures, a living prophet and scriptures that are written for our day to give us the perfect recipe to get the outcome that we desire. And it's not one that we're going to outcome that we're going to have tomorrow or in 30 minutes like a cake would bake. But what is promised that that will be our outcome, that eternal life, celestial glory returning to our heavenly father, being with our Savior, being with our loved ones that we have lost on this side of the veil. That is the promise. That's the ultimate goal. We'll get there. Got to follow that recipe.
Hank Smith:	37:08	I laughed about it because I thought that is me where I say, Lord, this looks nothing like you said it would. Okay. Did you do what I asked you to do? Sort of, yeah. I tweaked a couple of things. He's got to be just like you Courtney, going, well I don't know what you made, but that is not, that's not what I had designed. Right. Instead of telling the Lord his recipe is wrong, why don't we change the way we approach the cooking? John, what do you have there? Do you have any thoughts there?

John Bytheway:	37:41	And I don't want us to think everything is such an easy formula. I mean, Hank, you know, my struggles finding someone that would accept my marriage proposal, some mission companions got home and were married in six months and some weren't. Some things didn't work out. But that's the whole point of this lesson. You keep our eyes on Christ and there's an outcome that is so good. Although it's fun to go Hank, isn't it, to a youth fireside. And ask the adults in the room, raise your hand if your life turned out exactly the way you thought and nobody raises their hands. And the youth look around and they're kind of shocked.
Hank Smith:	38:25	Yeah. Wait, what? Yeah, I think the Lord would say to me, okay, now are you going to the temple regularly? Well, yeah, I mean, yeah. I mean I drive by it on my way to work and my way back and I feel like that's pretty close. I just can picture Courtney closing her eyes going, okay, let me help you. Please don't switch out those things. I love the analogy. So, thanks for humoring us there, Courtney. And Courtney, thank you for being here.
Courtney Rich:	38:55	Oh my pleasure. Thank you for having me. What a privilege it was to be able to really spend the last couple few months thinking about the resurrection and what that means to me. What it means for each of us. And being able to spend time in the stories of Mary and the disciples, putting myself where they were and seeing myself as them, and really making this a very personal, intimate study of Holy weekend of Easter.
Hank Smith:	39:26	I'm grateful for the time you took to prepare. I know that our listeners are as well. I think there's many people out there going, she spoke to me. That lesson was for me. John, this is a great job.
John Bytheway:	39:42	Yeah, it is. I'm thinking about the first scripture that Courtney read that was after the Kirtland Temple dedication when Jesus appeared. I was a little kid when we used to watch the 10 Commandments every Easter. That movie used to come on. We didn't have videotapes back then or on demand, but luckily it came on every Easter. I used to wonder why until I learned that Passover, Easter, you know, these things are connected. I always remembered when Moses was talking to God in the burning bush, he said, they're going to ask me what your name is. And he said, I am. And I thought, as a kid, that doesn't sound like a name but what a cool idea I am. When we see his appearance in the Kirtland Temple, it's like the Savior bearing testimony of himself. I love that. The verse, Courtney, that you started with from section 110 of the Doctrine and Covenants,

when Jesus appeared it's like he's bearing testimony of himself. I'm always fascinated with things the Lord repeats. He repeats I am, four times in this verse. Just love it's not, I was, not I used to be, not way back in the past you can think about me. No, I am the first and the last. I am He who liveth, I am He who was slain. I am your advocate with the Father. Wow. That's the message of Easter. Not he was, but he is. He liveth right now. Thanks for beginning with that verse.

- Courtney Rich: 41:23 With that the I am drives home that point of these blessings are ours. They're available to us now. I love that He follows that up with, lift up your heads and rejoice. Let your hearts of your brethren rejoice. And the hearts of all my people, rejoice, talk about repeating things. Rejoice. This is such a happy thing. I know that we just read about the sadness that Mary felt and the disciples and that disappointment and not knowing, but this is the most joyful thing because of the promises and what this means for each of us now in our lives. Being able to have this gift of repentance, being able to join him again someday. Having a Lord who is so patient with us, that it will remind us over and over again and is always there for us as we turn back to him and the promise of I will appear unto my servants and I will speak unto them like I am here. Talking about that, hearing him and knowing his voice. He's going to help us understand how he speaks to each one of us as we are diligent and willing and have the desire to listen and turn our hearts to him. That whole section right there, four through eight is really so, so beautiful. I love the repetition as well.
- Hank Smith: 42:43 Yeah, that's great John. And great additions there Courtney. Listening to you teach Courtney keeps bringing to mind, the writer of Hebrews called the Savior the high priest of good things to come. And that seems to be a lot of your message. Good things are coming. Hold on, stay there. We want to thank our friend Courtney Rich one more time. Go to Instagram cake by Courtney. We want to thank Courtney for being with us today. It has been a treat.
- John Bytheway: 43:16 I see what you did there. That's good.
- Courtney Rich: 43:18 I like it. I like it.
- Hank Smith: 43:20 Happy Easter to all of you. Come on to YouTube or come over to follow him.co. Send us a message or leave a comment on YouTube and tell Courtney where you're listening from. It's really fun to share that with our guests. And finally, we want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and every episode, especially this

Easter season, we remember our founder. We know he's still helping us. Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're jumping right back into the Doctrine & Covenants on followHIM. Thank you for joining us on today's episode. Do you or someone you know speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French? You can now watch and listen to our podcast in those languages. Links are in the description below. Today's show notes and transcripts are on our website. Follow him.co. That's follow him.co. Of course, none of this could happen without our production team. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Amelia Kabwika, and Annabelle Sorensen.

followHIM Favorites



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| Hank Smith: | 00:03 | Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. This is where John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, it's Easter at followHIM, and you've told me that you have a touching story for Easter. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:15 | Easter's the most important holiday. If without Easter, there's no Christmas, right? |
| Hank Smith: | 00:19 | Yep. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:20 | There's a story that Elder Orlando A. Castaños, an area seventy told. It was published in the April 2025, Liahona. He said, two weeks ago, I received a touching letter from a father of seven children who wrote about his family, and in particular his son Jason, who contracted an illness at age 11. In the following years, Jason's illness recurred several times. The father commented on Jason's positive attitude and cheerful temperament. Despite his health problems, Jason received the Aaronic priesthood, the age of 12, always magnified his responsibilities willingly and excellently whether he felt well or not. Last summer, shortly after Jason turned 15, he had to be hospitalized again. During one of his visits, his father found Jason with his eyes closed, not knowing if his son was asleep or awake. He began to speak to him softly. Jason. He said, I know you faced many difficulties in your short life. |
| | 01:13 | Your condition is tough, although you have a great battle ahead. I never want you to lose your faith in Jesus Christ. The father said he was startled when Jason immediately opened his eyes and said, never, in a clear and resolute voice. Then Jason closed his eyes and said nothing more. His father wrote, with that simple declaration, Jason expressed one of the most powerful and pure testimonies of Jesus Christ I have ever heard with his affirmation. Never was etched into my soul that day. My heart filled with joy because my heavenly Father had blessed me with being the father of such a great and noble young man. Wow. That was the last time I heard him bear his testimony of Christ. |

Although the family hoped this would be just another routine hospitalization, Jason passed away in less than two weeks. At that time, Jason's older brother and sister were serving as missionaries. Another brother Kyle, had just received his mission call. In fact, the call arrived earlier than expected. On August 5th, just a week before Jason passed away, the family gathered in the hospital room to open Kyle's mission call letter and share it with the whole family. In the letter his father wrote to me, he also sent a photograph of Jason in the hospital bed with his older brother, Kyle, by his side holding the mission call. At the bottom of the photograph they had written called to serve their missions together on both sides of the veil.

Hank Smith:	02:42	Wow.
John Bytheway:	02:44	Yeah. Isn't that beautiful way to look at it?
Hank Smith:	02:46	That's so tender.
John Bytheway:	02:47	And Hank it reminds me of when I was a an EFY counselor. EFY is now FSY. Think 40 years ago, Hank okay. Think eighties. 1980s
Hank Smith:	02:59	Was a good decade. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	03:00	Yeah. I was just a counselor and we had to report some really sad news to somebody. I can't remember if it was a family member or friend, but we had to go tell a young teenager that some, a beloved friend or family member had just died. I went with the session director. Our session directors were typically, you know, really experienced institute teachers or seminary teachers.
Hank Smith:	03:25	Yeah. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	03:26	Hank, I don't even remember who this was, but I remember him telling this beautiful story about a man who crossed the country in a train. The way train travels it's not like airplanes where you get on and the same group that got on the plane gets off. Right? People get off at different stops. You stop for dinner, you get back on the train, you travel, you stop for lunch, you get back on the train.
Hank Smith:	03:49	Right.
John Bytheway:	03:49	It's a journey. This man and this friend, they became dear friends on the train, get off and have dinner together, and they'd get back on again and have lunch together and

sometimes travel overnight just became close. Well, one time there was a night stop and they got off and were separated or something, and one of these men got back on the train and sat down and was like, where's my friend? And his friend was gone, and the conductor, I guess found him and said, oh, I'm so sorry. Something happened and he had to take an earlier train out, but you're going to the same place. He just caught an earlier train. I don't remember who that session director was, but that was a very comforting story, you know?

Hank Smith:	04:35	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	04:35	The separation is temporary. You're going to the same place. He just caught an earlier train.
Hank Smith:	04:40	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	04:41	I like that way of looking at it. The time part of it hurts, and Jesus says it's okay to mourn with those that mourn. There's a reunion coming.
Hank Smith:	04:50	Mm-hmm.
John Bytheway:	04:50	In a wonderful place.
Hank Smith:	04:52	I love that. John, I remember after my father died, I was pretty frustrated with the Lord. I told him so that I felt the timing wasn't so good. I remember it was getting a response, I think, from the Spirit, something like this. He's having a pretty good time right now with his parents and his friends and people he has lost. You sure you want me to take that away from him and bring him back so you can feel better? And I said, well, anything sounds bad when you say it like that, right? But it was one of those moments. I will be there too. One day.
John Bytheway:	05:32	Yeah, that's right. And all of it because the tomb was empty that first Easter morning, then all of us will have those reunions to look forward to, and they're in a great place from everything we've heard.
Hank Smith:	05:44	You might say, John, that one of the most important things Christ did was take away the fear of death.
John Bytheway:	05:50	Mm-hmm.

Hank Smith:	05:51	Yeah. You and I almost look forward to it. I don't want to die, but if it's going to happen, I've got people I am excited to see. Talk to. Laugh with.
John Bytheway:	06:02	President Nelson tells a story of being on an an airplane where, what happened? It was like a propeller driven airplane, and the engine,
Hank Smith:	06:09	Something was
John Bytheway:	06:10	Exploded or something.
Hank Smith:	06:11	Right.
John Bytheway:	06:11	He said that people on the plane were screaming and he was thinking, I'm going to see my family. You know? It was totally different because of our of Christ. Right.
Hank Smith:	06:23	I love it. I love it. Well, come join us on our full podcast this week. We're looking at the Easter holiday. You don't want to skip this one. We're with Courtney Rich and she shares some personal experiences that touch John and I, I think will touch you as well and then come back next week, we'll do another followHIM Favorites.