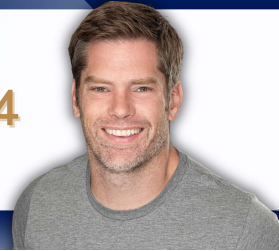




EPISODE 14

GUEST: DIRECTOR DALLAS JENKINS



“He Will Swallow Up Death in Victory”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

followHIM: 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

What if the greatest story ever told felt deeply personal again? In this Easter-focused conversation, Dallas Jenkins shares how he is bringing the resurrection of Jesus Christ to life in upcoming seasons of *The Chosen*. With intimacy and emotional depth, Jenkins reveals his own faith journey that reshaped his career, his creative and spiritual approach to the Savior's final days, and what it truly means to celebrate Easter with joy that is both real and transformative.

Timecodes:

- 00:00 Easter - Dallas Jenkins
- 1:00 Welcome and Lisa gushes
- 2:10 Easter in the Jenkins family
- 5:04 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 6:35 Portraying the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus
- 09:15 A gateway to testimony

- 11:34 Why does it have to be so brutal?
- 14:33 Getting to show what comes next
- 16:26 The biggest struggle in Season 5
- 20:53 How to portray the Road to Emmaus?
- 23:45 Who is the Jesus of popular expectation?
- 27:22 Dallas @ BYU
- 33:43 Measuring success
- 34:37 How to focus on Easter?
- 38:33 Dallas on LDS turf
- 42:42 Understanding through building a scene
- 44:58 Pool of Siloam
- 46:13 Jesus in his hometown and a joyous scene
- 48:03 Evangelical mascot for the LDS
- 50:31 The Chosen points to reading the scriptures
- 53:02 Watch Season 6 for the joy in Season 7
- 56:01 Personal challenges and teamwork with Amanda
- 59:41 Spouses supporting our ministry
- 1:01:12 Matthew and Peter
- 1:06:48 Ways to support Brother Jenkins
- 1:10:20 Which character surprised Dallas?
- 1:14:09 Jonathan isn't Jesus and a Green Burrito
- 1:16:53 Actors being prepared by God
- 1:19:40 Red Sea Moments
- 1:21:30 Feeling chosen and its "not all rainbows and unicorns"
- 1:25:58 Ezekiel and Easter
- 1:28:05 Gratitude for Dallas's testimony of Jesus Christ
- 1:30:47 End of Easter - Dallas Jenkins

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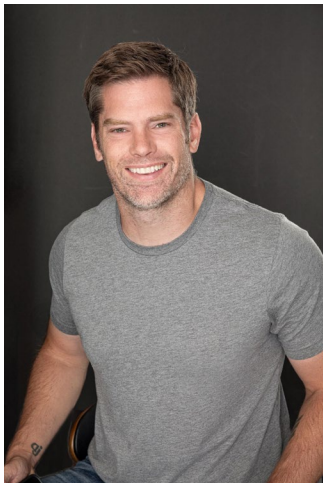
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Biographical Information:



Dallas Jenkins (born July 25, 1975) is an American film and television director, writer, and producer best known as the creator, director, co-writer, and executive producer of *The Chosen*, the first multi-season television series about the life of Jesus Christ.

Raised in a storytelling-centered family—his father is bestselling author Jerry B. Jenkins—Jenkins developed an early interest in filmmaking and went on to study at the University of Northwestern–St. Paul.

He began his career in film with projects such as *Hometown Legend* (2000), which was distributed by Warner Bros., and later directed feature films including *What If...* (2010) and *The Resurrection of Gavin Stone* (2017).

Jenkins is widely recognized for pioneering a new model of faith-based storytelling through *The Chosen*, which became one of the most successful crowdfunded media projects in history and a global phenomenon, reaching hundreds of millions of viewers worldwide.

His work focuses on creating authentic, human-centered portrayals of biblical figures, emphasizing emotional resonance and narrative depth while remaining grounded in the Gospel accounts.

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- Hank Smith: 00:00:00 Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
- Dallas Jenkins: 00:00:04 We were gonna be using the LDS set in Goshen, Utah. It was the only place we were gonna be able to film season two because everything else was closed down during COVID and there's no places in the States that work and we're looking overseas and that's not working. And then the church told us, no, can't use it. And I'm like, man, that's weird. I thought God had put it on my heart to use this set and I'd visited it and felt like God was speaking to me and telling me lives are gonna change with the work you do on this set. And then they said no. And I'm like, I guess I was wrong.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:37 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my joyful co-host, John Bytheway. John, straight out of the manual this week, Easter is a joyful time.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:50 If there's no Easter, there's no Christmas and we think of joy with Christmas, but if there's no Easter... it's all about [Easter](#). It's all about the Resurrection.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:00 Easter is what matters. John, we are honored and privileged today to be joined by the creator of the Chosen, Dallas Jenkins. Dallas welcome to followHIM.
- Dallas Jenkins: 00:01:09 Yeah, thanks for having me. You guys do great work.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:11 We are excited to have you. One of our team members, her name is Lisa Spice. She says this is the greatest day of her recording life on followHIM. John, when you think of Easter, what comes to mind?
- John Bytheway: 00:01:25 When I was a little kid, we would be at church, and if I was having trouble paying attention, my mom would say, "Think about Jesus," and I would think about a picture in my mind. I would try to anyway. Later, you get older and you lose people,

you lose your grandparents. My brother lost a baby. The more and more I started thinking about that empty tomb and that he was risen. That has helped me. The best part to remember about Christ is that he was not there when they went to the tomb.

- Hank Smith: 00:01:59 You've lost both your parents. I've lost both my parents. Because of the Lord, I like to say we hope for that reunion, but we actually expect to have that reunion.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:09 Totally expect it. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:10 Absolutely. One day. Dallas, what comes to mind for you? When you think of Easter, what's it like in the Jenkins family?
- Dallas Jenkins: 00:02:19 Well, at the moment, it's how do I portray the Resurrection in a way that will bring joy and clarity and ultimately worship to people because we're filming season seven this year, which is our Resurrection season. It's been very much on the brain for a long time because I feel a sense of responsibility to get it right. Now, that said, this has been true of my whole experience making the show, which is that if you're gonna make a show that portrays Christ to hundreds of millions of people, you really need to know Him. And I've been raised in the faith my whole life. You never stop learning more and more about Christ and understanding more and more. It's endless on this side of eternity, at least. Every year around Easter, one of the things that I think is beautiful about it, about the yearly tradition is that some of us who are prone to wander maybe in our thoughts or in our focus throughout the year are forced to think about the greatest and most impactful moment of our lives, even though we didn't experience the Resurrection ourselves in person, the Resurrection that took place 2,000 years ago, we're forced to reflect on it and then forced to also consider how it still applies today, how resurrection and rebirth and new life and dead becoming alive still applies today.
- 00:03:40 For me, every time that Easter comes around, I really do, as a, especially as a storyteller, think about how this story still impacts us 2,000 years later and how I never wanna take it for granted. I think that's what The Chosen is in many ways, is my attempt to make sure that we never take it for granted by looking at the Resurrection as this event that we're somewhat distant from. Sometimes church can become, in many ways, a more formal, reverent approach to the man of Jesus Christ. That can be very good and be very healthy, but it can also create sometimes a distance. I think that the Resurrection is an opportunity to go, Jesus of Nazareth, we know he was fully God

and fully man, but the human side of him came back on that day and appeared to his friends and appeared to his family because he wanted to make something very intimate and special communicated to us, which is, I am with you, I am among you, and I have conquered death, therefore you now can also conquer death. I'm always trying to refresh the things we already know and make them even more intimate and more authentic, as opposed to just being reminded of them and then looking at them from a distance, in a painting or in a Bible reading or in a gathering on a Sunday morning where we're all gonna dress up and talk about it. No, this was actually something that really happened that we can participate in.

- Hank Smith: 00:05:04 That's beautiful. What is it, John, the Bible Dictionary says? "If the Resurrection be admitted, if you believe in it, every other miracle ceases to be improbable." If he can do that, he can do anything. Dallas, we talked before we hit record that we do a little [Come, Follow Me](#) program every week where we study a portion of the scriptures. I'm gonna read from our church's manual on this. The lesson this week is on Easter, He will swallow up death in victory. This is how the manual starts. It says, "The life of Jesus Christ is central to all human history. What does that mean? In part, it means that the Savior's life influences the eternal destiny of everyone who has ever lived or ever will live. You might also say that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on that first Easter Sunday connects all of God's people throughout history.
- 00:05:55 Those who were born before his resurrection looked forward to it with faith. Those who were born after, look back on it with faith. As we read Old Testament accounts and prophecies, we don't ever see the name Jesus Christ. We do see the evidence of the ancient believer's faith in and longing for their Messiah and Redeemer. So we who are invited to remember him can feel a connection with those who looked forward to him. For truly Jesus Christ has borne the iniquity of us all, and in Christ shall all be made alive." Beautiful way to start. Dallas, I think our audience would be really interested in what you can tell us about how to portray the Resurrection. I can't imagine. How do you make those decisions? Yes, we're gonna keep that. Yes, we're gonna edit that.
- Dallas Jenkins: 00:06:41 Sure.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:42 That's gotta be overwhelming because it's something, of course, hundreds of millions of people are looking forward to.

- Dallas Jenkins: 00:06:48 There's two ways to approach the Resurrection if you are tasked with recreating it for media in some way. As you know, there are multiple accounts in the gospels of what that morning was like and who was involved. We can harmonize them, but you go, okay, well, Mary Magdalene came by herself at one point. Then there was a point where all the women came together. There was a time where she encountered Jesus. She thought he was the gardener. Then there's this other account where they run in, the tomb's empty and they talk to two angels who are dressed in white. It's a little bit scattered. And my job as a storyteller making a TV show isn't necessarily to get up in front of a congregation as a pastor or as a lay leader and harmonize all those things and take them through it. [The Chosen](#) is a TV show.
- 00:07:36 It's meant to be entertaining while also trying as best as possible to be faithful, of course, to the scriptures, but also authentic, even in the moments that aren't directly from scripture. I don't have the responsibility or the requirement to include every gospel. I wanna make sure that I'm not changing things, but it's okay for me to sometimes just go, all right, I'm gonna choose this portion of scripture and maybe not do that portion of scripture because this portion, maybe it's more cinematic, maybe it's more related specifically to our characters. And that shouldn't be the only factor, because obviously biblical fidelity is a high priority as well. It's one of multiple factors, if that makes sense. I wanna make sure I get it right, but this isn't a documentary. Finding the moments from the gospels that kind of add up to a cohesive narrative for a purpose of a TV show is my primary task.
- 00:08:25 The second thing I wanna make very clear is that for me, from the purpose of a TV show, I want to capture the heart of the viewer. I'm not just capturing the intellect. I'm not just teaching them something. I'm trying to get them to feel something, to feel that what took place 2,000 years ago has relevance to them today, and that when they watch it, if there's an intimate, authentic, emotional response, what we've found in the years that *The Chosen* has been out is that becomes, for so many people, a gateway into a more robust, and yes, even intellectual relationship with Christ and with the Bible and with the Gospels. It's not that I necessarily learned something new, I felt something new. And that caused certain things that I've studied to become more alive and more relevant and more personal and more authentic and more intimate.
- 00:09:25 So again, it's not new. It's not like, oh my goodness, my theology is different now because Dallas Jenkins portrayed a scene for me. It's not that. It's, wow, I'd never thought of it that way.

Wow. I'd never felt it that way. Oh, I've heard it. I've intellectually understood it, but it hasn't necessarily reached that part of me that moves us emotionally. That's my primary task. So I've got tools in my tool belt like music and editing and visual effects. Also, the ability to tie, and this is where you guys come in, especially with what you're studying right now, the Old Testament, to tie the Old Testament to the New Testament, the past, present, and future. I know this is a very long answer to your question, but in both seasons six, which is the Crucifixion season, and season seven, the Resurrection season, one of the things that I've been able to do is use the power of story, the power of visual effects, the power of performance and music and all of those things to actually do something that I think a lot of scholars have done, but maybe not in an emotional way, which is tie the past and the present and the future.

00:10:36 So while Jesus is on the cross, we found a way in season six, which hasn't come out yet, of course, to remind you that what Jesus is doing on the cross was visually and verbally communicated thousands of years before through Moses, that Passover, angel of death passing over these homes because of the blood of an innocent lamb put in three marks on a doorpost, left, right, and above, that that actually visually matches Jesus' wrists and his head on a cross. It visually matches what the Father told Moses to do when the people were dying of snake bites, putting a bronze serpent onto a pole and all they needed to do was look at it to be healed. Jesus reminded Nicodemus of that in John chapter three. We made these kind of ... Well, now we can do it visually and now we can tie Moses to Jesus and the Old to the New.

00:11:34 There's a moment when the Apostle John and Mary Magdalene approached Jesus at the cross in Season six, again, none of this has come out yet, of course, where they're saying to him, why? Why does it have to be this way? Why does it have to be so brutal? I know you can save yourself at any point. We get it. We can perhaps go along with you to be arrested and to be deferential, but why does it have to be so painful? Why does it have to be this way? Jesus reminds them of the prophecy from Isaiah, and by his wounds, we were healed, and the chastisement upon him brought us peace. John says, "Peace, this is not peace." And Jesus says, "Not yet." That's the key. That's the thing that His Crucifixion promises is that, okay, right now, in this pain, in this moment, and all of us have gone through this, all of us have experienced pain and sadness and sacrifice and even death, to trust that the Savior has a larger plan, to trust that God has all of this in his hand and is telling humanity a story of redemption is very, very difficult.

00:12:36 But this whole idea of not yet happening during the Crucifixion of this does have meaning, this does have import, this will bring peace, this will bring redemption, is fulfilled in the Resurrection. And so I don't wanna just capture the rolling of the stone and Jesus emerging from the tomb and encountering Mary Magdalene. I actually want you to understand and to feel it so that it feels like my Savior, my friend, my Redeemer has conquered death so that I can participate in this. That might be the longest answer to any question you've asked on your podcast. I apologize for hijacking it, but this has been on my brain for the last year and a half.

Hank Smith: 00:13:16 We love to hear it. Jesus on the cross reaching back towards Moses, reaching forward to us.

John Bytheway: 00:13:22 When you remember that Jesus said, "No man taketh my life from me," that it was a willing sacrifice. You realize he is motivated by pure love. That's what makes it so amazing that though they didn't kill him, he offered himself, looked like they did maybe, but he offered himself as a willing sacrifice.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:13:43 Oh, for sure, because he also made it clear that he could escape and could prevent it at any point. That's something you gloss over sometimes when you're reading and he outright said to the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, don't you know at any moment I could just call on legions of angels. Yes, of course I can fix this at any time if I want to. Portraying that is unique. It's like, okay, what might that look like and how do we really communicate some of the supernatural elements of this, which are always tricky when you're doing a TV show that's grounded in reality. There's a spiritual reality that's tough to portray because you don't know exactly what it looks like. For us to put our toe into those waters, there's that moment in the garden, of course, where he says, "I am he" to the group that's there to arrest him. The power of that knocks them over.

00:14:33 Now, it's kind of a funny thing in scripture. Like what happened? Why did you do that? What's the aftermath? So we get a chance in the show to portray, what does that mean for everybody? So for his disciples, they're like, hey, do that again. You can ... Okay, you can do that. Easy. What's the next step? And then he holds his hands out to get handcuffed. You're like, wait. What does it mean for Judas? Judas who is looking at this power portrayed right in front of him, what does that mean for him? We get to explore all of that in season six, which is really fun. It's risky because again, you don't know what it would have looked like and you're always like, man, I hope this isn't cheesy or weird, but we get a chance to explore all that. But my point is to

support what you're saying, which is I remember when we showed a teaser of a scene or something and there was an executive from one of the studios that we're partnered with, one of the Hollywood studios.

00:15:22 And afterwards, she's like, Jesus knew he was going to die? She hadn't really made that connection. We take some of those things for granted. But the notion that he knew he was going to die and went to Jerusalem anyway, this is things we see in season five. He actually told the disciples what was gonna happen and they just were like, shoot, went right over their heads. They thought he was giving another parable. That concept alone could be life altering for millions of people around the world. What you just said when you go, He didn't get killed, he gave himself up. He didn't get arrested. He gave himself up. That is a life-altering truth that shouldn't be taken for granted because when you realize, oh, he willingly did this as in he took steps to make it happen, huh. Oh, maybe you can even go back to season four, you can go back to earlier moments in the gospels.

00:16:17 Why did he allow Lazarus to die only to resurrect him? Why didn't he just stop it in the first place? Well, when you think about the fact that it was a week before his crucifixion, and it's the single thing that stirred up the people and stirred up his enemies, you go, huh, he did this on purpose. He orchestrated this on purpose. This is a truly jaw-dropping truth when you go, oh my goodness, these are chess pieces that are being put into place for the purpose of death that when we're casually reading the scriptures, and then this happened, and then this happened, and then this happened, you don't really think about that per se, but for a lot of people, it's going to be life-changing truth.

Hank Smith: 00:16:55 For my students at BYU, I'll frequently say he's living his ministry in crescendo. He's doing this on purpose. It's building to a certain moment. He's holding back, he's holding back, he's holding back, and that raising of Lazarus leading to the triumphal entry changes everything. You mentioned that the disciples, they don't really know. They kind of know, and especially afterwards when they're looking back, oh yeah. But John is the one who's honest and says, we didn't really understand. So how do you portray that? He is telling them they don't get it.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:17:26 The biggest struggle of season five is how do we make these guys not total idiots? And even some of the actors, especially those who don't know the story as well, are like ... So he's outright telling us what's gonna happen. And that's what we

forget sometimes in the Gospels He actually says, I'm gonna die, and three days later, I'm gonna rise again, and I'm gonna be tortured and get... Like he says all these things, and they go, yeah, interesting. When we get to heaven, who's gonna be on your right hand and who's gonna be on your left hand? So you gotta go, why wouldn't they get it? Why would it go over their heads when Jesus is outright telling them? Throughout season five, we portray, and I think it's accurate, I think it's plausible, that the disciples must have just assumed he was giving another parable, another figure of speech, because he does that all the time.

00:18:13 Like he was constantly speaking in parables, constantly saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." He was constantly saying, you won't get this, but others will. I've hidden from understanding some people and others, I've revealed it. One of the things that he says in season five at The Last Supper is that I think explains it, and this is from the Gospels, of course. I'm gonna paraphrase, but he says, I'm telling you these things now, even though you don't understand, even though you won't even believe, really. I'm doing it now so that when it all takes place, you can look back and know, oh, this was God. It will help you believe when you see it all play out exactly how I said. But right now, like, he's a teacher just going, you don't need to write this down. It won't be on the test.

00:18:54 It'll make sense later. That's how we figured it out, but throughout season five, and yes, even some of season six, we go back to that well multiple times of the disciples going, wait a second. Okay. He just got arrested, so he said that was gonna happen. What's next? Okay, well, he said this, but that can't be because they wouldn't have a hallway that would have been so incomprehensible that their Messiah, the person who's there to overthrow the Romans and to lead them to a new kingdom, they would not have had any understanding of or belief that he was just gonna die. When he said it, they had to have been going like, okay, that's a spiritual metaphor or whatever. Then when it actually happens, it's a total shock to the system and that's what we explore in parts of season six. And of course, we'll explore more in season seven.

Hank Smith: 00:19:44 I love it because you're taking the disciples from where they are, not from where they are later in life, where they are at the moment, right? They don't know what happens on the next page.

John Bytheway: 00:19:55 Well, they're all just learning. When Jesus tells Peter, cast the net on the other side and Peter, he's learning and he says,

"Follow me." And Peter comes out and this could be kind of a great arrangement. You tell me where to fish. I can get them and this could be a great partnership. They were all learning day by day what this was all about, and they had their own learning curve, and I love what you said, and so do we.

- Dallas Jenkins: 00:20:21 Yeah, it really helps us when we go through our trials or our confusing scenarios to think back to these moments from the Gospels of going, oh, that Jesus met us there then as well. Because we can help you as a viewer identify with these people, not just as stained glass windows or as names on a page, but as human beings like we were and who struggled and weren't always heroes of the faith, then we can identify with the answer in the same way that they did.
- Hank Smith: 00:20:53 Yeah. John knows how much I love Luke 24. These two, when they turn to the Lord, not knowing it's him and say, We thought it was him. We were sure it was him. Obviously, it's not, we're leaving, we're going home, whatever it is, and he says, oh, oh, you fools.
- Dallas Jenkins: 00:21:10 Yeah, yeah, yeah. As I speak, like this morning, I sent a text to my co-writers about that passage. We're still working it out because it's such a weird thing to try to portray in our TV show is how do they not recognize him? Who are they? I would assume we scholars agree that it probably wasn't two of the 12. It's a very, very strange thing to try to have to put it into a TV show format. We're still actually working it out. Haven't quite cracked the code yet, but we're hoping to get there.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:39 Everybody goes through that in life, those Luke 24 moments where you said, it didn't happen the way I was sure it was gonna happen. We start to doubt him instead of doubt what we hoped, what we thought.
- Dallas Jenkins: 00:21:52 What's expressed in that story in scripture is terrific. And we, that's why we wanna ... We thought about not including that story because it's so odd. I mean, in terms of how to portray it, I didn't wanna be distracting. We were ultimately kind of like, I don't think the viewers will forgive us if we leave that one out. 'Cause there's not a whole lot of moments in the scriptures post-resurrection. We've got a whole season to try to cover, and if one of the very few from the scriptures we just decided to leave out, that would be unforgivable. We're just trying to figure out how to do it. I mean, the whole idea of, like, I guess we were wrong. I portrayed this concept and not the road to Emmaus, but back when I was doing short films and vignettes about the Crucifixion at my church, between 2010 and 2015,

which is my training ground for [The Chosen](#), we did a short film about that time in between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, which is, which you never see portrayed.

00:22:50 The disciples in hiding, what were they talking about? What were they doing? And one of the lines was from the character of Thomas who says, well, he can't be the Messiah now, obviously. Why waste our time when the others are like, what are you talking about? Are you crazy? You saw the miracles! He's like, well, yeah, but he's dead. The Messiah can't be dead. It's just common sense. I've been wrestling with that for 15 years. What would it have been like in that time between Friday and Saturday or whatever day of the week we wanna ascribe it for the apostles, they had to be so confused. That's why the road to Emmaus is so interesting that when the Bible says Jesus' presence was, you know, his identity was hidden from them, then it was revealed to them at the last moment, then he disappears. It would've been so incomprehensible for them to be talking to Jesus, that you have to wonder even if he'd showed up in front of them that they would've believed it.

John Bytheway: 00:23:45 I mean, you read the Gospels and who was the Messiah of popular expectation? It was more of a, I'm gonna deliver you from the Romans. Jesus was like, we have tougher enemies like sin and death, but weren't they expecting more of a political Messiah at the time?

Dallas Jenkins: 00:24:04 Yeah, that's what then causes additional confusion that the Apostles, and we see it even in the writings of Luke and Paul, that the whole, the completed understood gospel that we have now, Atonement and Redemption and all those things, they still wouldn't have fully gotten it yet. When he comes back and they still are saying, so now are you gonna restore the kingdom? Even before the ascension, they were like, I assume you've come back to now you're gonna do what we've expected for thousands of years. Good point, we get it. You died to prove the whole resurrection is possible that you've conquered death, blood of an innocent lamb, sacrifice, atonement, good, we got it. Now, let's kill the Romans. He's like, nope, you're now supposed to go spread the word. Oh, great. We'll go tell all our Jewish friends and family. No, no, Gentiles too. What?

John Bytheway: 00:24:59 Wait, what?

Dallas Jenkins: 00:25:02 There's so much that they still didn't fully understand all the way up through his ascension.

Hank Smith: 00:25:07 Yeah. In the resurrection, as I read the Gospels, the Apostles, here the Savior dies, is resurrected. The skeptic might say, oh, he was never resurrected. Well, then how do you explain? They got stronger after he died, after their experiences with the resurrected Lord, they're completely different.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:25:31 Yeah. The outsider, the skeptic can say, if you don't believe in the Resurrection, Jesus didn't resurrect, his body was hidden or whatever it was. How do you explain that in the weeks after Christ's death, the disciples got bold, and then especially after the 40-day mark, they turned into, by some objective measures, practically suicidal.

Hank Smith: 00:25:57 Right. Heading right back into the wolves.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:26:00 Oh, I'm, I'm not only gonna go hard, I'm gonna go harder than I've ever gone. I'm gonna go to places that I've never been. I'm gonna dive into the lion's den and if you wanna kill me, that has no impact on my confidence level or joy. They saw something and, you know, someone that gave them that confidence because you know they had to have been devastated by his death, they had to have been confused. They had to have been, I guess we were wrong. Mary Magdalene goes and tells the apostles who are hidden and they don't believe her. Peter and John at least go to check. We don't know for sure if, where they were on the spectrum of belief or disbelief, but we do know they went to check, they saw the empty tomb and then immediately went home because they'd gotten this message from Mary, because Jesus has said, tell them to go straight to Galilee. Well, we show that Peter especially, I'm not messing around ever again.

00:27:02 I'm not questioning, I'm not doubting, I'm not pushing back on Jesus. When he says, go to Galilee, I'm leaving the tomb and I'm going straight to Galilee. I've denied him three times. I have argued with him when he asked me to wash his feet. I've been a thorn in his side, no pun intended, multiple times. I'm going to Galilee now, that's it.

John Bytheway: 00:27:22 I'm sure that a lot of our listeners would love to know more of your backstory, Dallas, and I thought you told it so beautifully at the BYU Devotional. I want to say October of 2024. I think it's on speeches.byu.edu. This is what I love about Dallas Jenkins and we've never met personally. I want everybody to watch that devotional, but I also loved how the Lord touched you and said, your job is just to bring the five loaves and two fishes, I'll do the rest. Can you describe the way he first did that and the way he

came later and said that again because that just made me go, wow.

Dallas Jenkins:

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I run into so many LDS friends or viewers of the show around the country sometimes. So many of them bring up that forum where I got a chance to speak at BYU to the students and community. There's something especially poignant about whenever God works through failure and works through our lack and our desperation, as opposed to working through success. I think it's especially wonderful when we see things that have become successful and The Chosen can be identified objectively as a successful project, of course, but that it wasn't always that way and that it could only have existed through failure and struggle, including my own. Our company is called 5 and 2 Studios. It's what you see now at the beginning of each episode. 5 and 2 is referring to the moment in my life that I was at my lowest. I had just done a movie that had high hopes and I'd worked with some of the top producers and distribution companies in Hollywood, and I'd finally achieved what I, or at least the opportunity to achieve what I had been seeking for a long time, which was impact and global success and legitimacy, that was my drug of choice, was legitimacy and affirmation.

00:29:17

And now I was getting that and certainly about to get it even more. And then this movie completely bombed and failed and I was confused and frustrated and devastated and I'm home alone with my wife and God points us to the story of the feeding of the 5,000. Again, my wife who's sensitive to the Spirit in a way that I'm not even always, he's just putting it on our heart. My LDS friends often refer to it as an impression. We in the Evangelical community would say, "God speaks to your heart," or when he put something on your heart, he's like, read the story of the feeding of the 5,000. She's like, I don't know why, but we're supposed to read that story. We're reading it and we're seeing some things we hadn't seen before and we found it really interesting that Jesus brought them to the place of hunger, but it wasn't like it just happened and then he came in and saved the day.

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He actually was responsible for the need. He's the one who'd been talking for three days. It was his fault they were so hungry and had gone without food for so long. That was really interesting and something I hadn't really thought of, of like, okay, just because we're in this desperate, devastated, hungry place, it can often make you feel like, well, God must not be in this because God's not the author of failure. That's what we always tell ourselves or have been taught. And so you go, well, we're in the midst of failure right now. I guess God is absent.

We need to find God. Oh, no, no. Many times, in fact, I would say most of the time, depending on your theology, but my theology is that God has the world in his hands and is oftentimes provincial in the failure and in the struggle and in the hunger.

00:30:41 So we were really thinking, okay, what does this mean then? Does this mean that we're about to see this big miracle and the numbers are gonna magically turn around at the box office? And that didn't happen. And so we're just kinda like, what does God have for us in this? Why? Why did he put us to this story? And was this even God's voice? I mean, sometimes you feel like something is from the Spirit and then you follow through on it and it, sometimes it just means that you had your own human instinct and it, you don't know if it was God's voice or not. Well, that night at four in the morning, I'm doing an analysis of everything that went wrong. I've got a 15 page memo going and right out of the blue just pops up on my computer screen. It was just this message on Facebook from someone I'd never actually met.

00:31:19 We just were Facebook friends. And he didn't even say hello. He just said, remember, your job is not to feed the 5,000. It's only to provide the loaves and fish. And gosh, I've told this story hundreds of times and it, every time it still makes me emotional because it's like, bring me to that place of like in that moment when you're actively seeking an answer and actively seeking understanding and then you're doing it on your own going, alright, I'm gonna analyze and I'm gonna use all my strengths that God gave me of problem solving and analyzation. And then this guy just pops this thing and to answer everything you've been wondering about all day. And I immediately go, what are you doing up at 4 in the morning? And he's like, well, I'm in Romania. I'm on the other side of the world. And I'm like, well, then why did you tell me that?

00:32:04 He goes, oh, that wasn't me. God told me to tell you that. God had put on his heart just as strongly as he had my wife's, tell Dallas this. And he was like, well, I don't wanna do that. I barely know the guy and that's a condescending thing to say to someone who's going through a big failure. He just said, God just kept pounding it on my heart, so he did it. It changed my life in that moment because I knew two things. One, God is real and present and is active in this moment and is trying to speak to me and two, the truth of Dallas, you keep feeling so responsible for the results and it's okay to analyze and it's okay to have goals, but ultimately, your job is to make the best five loaves and two fish that you can and whatever that is.

00:32:44 And then when I deem them worthy of acceptance, the transaction's over. The growth, the impact is up to me. Sometimes we can, in our attempt to be righteous, we can forget about grace. What I loved about that time that I was speaking at the forum was for a lot of us, even those who are older we're like, yeah, sometimes I feel a sense of responsibility, whether it's in my job or in my ministry even, to measure it by the numbers and the growth. And think about all the things you guys do in your faith that are unique to your faith that are measured. And especially in the LDS church, it's such an entrepreneurial spirit. Building something from scratch is like the hallmark of your culture and seeing it grow and seeing it have impact either spiritually or financially and to go, okay, I need to take the responsibility off my shoulders of thinking past what God is gonna do and just trust in giving him my best five loaves and two fish. That's why we call it our studio that is because it's just a constant reminder.

00:33:43 In an industry that measures you by the numbers in the box office, we have to remind ourselves that that's not the goal. The tone of voice that God had with me the first time he said this to me through this friend, Oh, Da- it was, it was reassuring. It was comforting. It was, you're feeling so low, Dallas. Just take this burden off you, you're not responsible for the feeding of the 5,000, you're just responsible for the loaves and fish, this comforting voice. Well, now you can fast forward five, seven years later, by every objective measure I've achieved way more than I ever set out to, I've gotten way more affirmation and legitimacy and awards and box office than I ever would have dreamed back in my years where those things mattered to me. God is like a different tone of voice. He's like, Dallas, it is not your job to feed the 5,000. You did not feed the 5,000. You were responsible for the loaves and fish. It's a good and healthy and important reminder.

Hank Smith: 00:34:37 Dallas, if someone wants to make [Easter](#) a bigger deal in their family, in their home, besides watching season six and seven, which they're gonna be able to over the next couple of years, what do you do? What would you say is a, something to bring it to life?

Dallas Jenkins: 00:34:53 I love these conversations because as you probably know, the birth of The Chosen includes a lot of LDS folks who I got a chance to meet in the distribution side and the marketing side and my co-founder of 5 and 2 Studios, Derral Eves. As we were getting to know each other and recognizing that I was gonna be embarking on this journey with several members of the church, I had questions myself and trying to understand some of the

differences in theology. One of the things I admire about the LDS folks is you guys are very well behaved, very tucked in. Now, occasionally I'll watch a BYU game and I'll see you cheer like crazy. When we celebrate Easter, at least in our church, on our Easter service, we would say, I've seen you cheer during a Bears game. I've seen you celebrate multiple sporting events or graduations.

00:35:45 What is the most celebratory and joyous and exciting moment and victory in the history of the world that we get to participate in? It's the resurrection of Christ. Why is it that when we announce and celebrate the resurrection of Christ, we clap, but in church, we're maybe a little more tucked in. Like this should be the most joyous and celebratory thing we can possibly do. The music that we sing and experience during our Easter services was always the most celebratory. You know, we're not what we call in the Evangelical world Pentecostal or charismatic. So we're not moving and grooving too often, but like during some of the songs, it's like, what if we jump up and down a little bit? What if we have our hands in the air? This isn't how we normally are, but let's do it. Well, what better way to celebrate than this?

00:36:27 What's interesting about that is because the church that I was part of for 10 years when I was developing The Chosen was a very story-driven church. Our pastor was a great storyteller. Our Good Friday services were equally sad and dark. We would do, because we were a church of over 12,000 attendees across six, seven campuses. So when we would do a Good Friday service, we'd put on this Good Friday service eight times for thousands of people at a time. Upwards of 15, 16, 17,000 people would show up over the course of Friday in multiple locations. We encouraged people to wear black. The music and the performances, and yes, even the short films that I did, cast Jonathan Roumie as Jesus. They were not celebratory and exciting and fun. It was a serious occasion. It was like a funeral, which then made Sunday morning services that much more powerful and exciting and beautiful and wonderful and joyous.

00:37:26 I appreciate the reverence of the different people within different faith traditions, and that some faith traditions, even within the Evangelical church, are a little bit more tucked in than others. But I would say it's okay to express as much joy or more in the Resurrection of your Savior as it is the student that hit a half court shot that I just saw in the BYU game on Friday. Seeing all these LDS folks just going crazy, I'm like, you, I, so I know you can do it. I know it's in you. It's okay to do it in the context of the greatest moment in the history of the world.

Hank Smith: 00:38:04 Yeah. That's fantastic. I do think I, I'm gonna do that more with my children this year. Let's celebrate.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:38:12 The first time might feel a little bit awkward, but it's like, come on, let's go for it. The disciples, I mean, you know, Mary Magdalene had to run to go tell the disciples. John and Peter then sprinted to the tomb. Like there was physical exertion taking place with this great news, and I think it's okay for us to show some of that sometimes.

Hank Smith: 00:38:32 Yeah. I think that's wonderful. One thing that Latter-day Saints believe, and not all of them know that we believe this, is that the Lord speaks to all men and women everywhere. In fact, one, a statement from a [First Presidency](#) back in the 1900s, we believe that God has given and will give to all people sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation. So I would love for our listeners who are predominantly Latter-day Saints to hear your testimony of the Lord. You know, if you wouldn't mind letting us into your heart and what he means to you.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:39:09 Absolutely. Every time I speak at BYU or I come on a podcast like yours or I come into LDS territory, it's always kind of the elephant in the room of, all right, well, the Evangelical guest has the microphone. I always wanna honor the fact that I'm a guest on your podcast and this is your home turf. I appreciate the opportunity to share my approach and my perspective on Christ. I think Evangelicals really lean into, we lean into as much as humanly possible, Ephesians two. For it is by grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourselves, but it is a gift of God. Now, I've found that in the Evangelical world, LDS world, Catholic world, all the different faith traditions, there tends to be a bit of a spectrum over the role of grace, the role of faith versus the role of works and the role of action.

00:40:01 Like I said, every tradition has its own strengths and weaknesses. I think that we Protestant Evangelicals are, do a fairly good job of really leaning into the grace side, the faith side. I personally have had a fairly healthy grasp for as long as I can remember of my small role in my own salvation. Now, I wanna make sure I'm clear when I say that, obviously, we have callings, God speaks to us. He asks things of us. I certainly have a role in, and there's plenty of scripture talking about pursuing righteousness and pursuing even perfection and the choice to follow Jesus, what he asks of us in his commandments in the Old Testament and what he asks of us in The Gospels. So I'm fully aware that we have a role in it, but I think that for me, I have always been most comfortable at the edge of the Red Sea

recognizing that, okay, he may ask me to strike the rock because he wants me to participate in this, but he doesn't need me to participate in this part of it.

00:41:11 He could have parted the Red Sea without Moses. He obviously has the ability to do that. The mystery comes in when why does he ask Moses to strike the rock? Why does he ask the Israelites to camp out at the edge of the Red Sea for several days, knowing that this would put them in peril and put them in a trapped position? Why does he ask us to gather five loaves and two fish when he could easily multiply it among the 5,000 himself without even needing something to start with? We know he can do that, but the mystery is why he invites us to participate in it. And I don't have all those answers, but I've been most comfortable recognizing that, okay, I will strike the rock. Okay, I will bring the five loaves and two fish. But whether it comes to the impact that my life has or even my own salvation, less of me, more of God.

00:42:03 It is by grace you are saved through faith. The grace of God, the grace of Christ is the foundation to my salvation, to my belief, and the works part, the what do we do for Christ is not to gain favor, it's not to earn a better place, it's not to achieve a higher level or enlightenment. It is out of gratitude and it is as a response to what he has done for us that we will never fully live up to. That is where I've been most at peace and most comfortable in my interpretation of scripture that is out of that that The Chosen is birthed.

Hank Smith: 00:42:42 That's beautiful. Dallas, our team member, Lisa Spice, she had a great question. She said, what's one gospel story you didn't fully appreciate until you had to build it scene by scene?

Dallas Jenkins: 00:42:53 Yeah, I hadn't actually had that question before. If you're gonna be tasked with portraying Jesus to the world, you better know him well. That applies to specific scenes and moments. There are two stories, I'm gonna say three, three that really come to mind where they took longer than normal to figure out what does this phrase mean and what does this reference mean and what's the context of it? One of them was the woman at the well. I don't know exactly how many verses it is, but I think it's somewhere in the neighborhood of 12. There's this conversation between Jesus and this woman, and there's so much context clearly that from the personal five husbands to the cultural Samaritans and Jews didn't talk to each other. Jesus is alone with a woman which single Jewish men didn't do. They're talking about mountains and temples and all these things that are very out of context.

- 00:43:50 And in a relatively short amount of time, she goes from fearing him and distrusting him to running crazily into the city to tell everyone that he's the Messiah. From a storytelling perspective, it's not a good scene. The character journey is way too quick. It skips steps. How do we show her journey in a plausible way? Unpacking all of that and learning the history and learning the cultural context, it took me a couple of weeks to really fully understand the meaning of the scene and of the story, and then what would be the triggers along the way in the conversation that would slowly melt her defenses and cause her to then ultimately become the first evangelist in some ways. That was a story that we were able to unpack and then put it throughout the episode and set it up in scenes that don't even include her, such as when they're on the journey towards where they're headed.
- 00:44:45 I don't even remember where it is. They're like, alright, we need to go around Samaria. He goes, no, we're gonna go through it. Well, no, we don't do that, Jesus. And then he explains why. And then he ends up there in the middle of the day. Why is she there in the middle of the day when women would have gone at the beginning of the day because it was so hot? Oh, because she's an outcast. Okay, that's interesting. Why is she an outcast? All of these things make the story in the scriptures that much more powerful and beautiful. That's something you don't get if you just do a literal verse by verse reenactment. The same thing is true of the healing at the pool of Bethesda, just a handful of verses. But when you talk about, okay, what's this weird thing, this tradition that they believed at the time that they could just go into the pool if it was stirred up by an angel and this guy's been there for decades, why didn't he get healed?
- 00:45:31 What is the history of the pool of Sialom and all of, all these things that when you unpack them, you're like, oh, wow, that's really interesting. Okay, he's been there for decades. I've listened to a few sermons about it and that psychology of it, of Jesus saying, do you wanna be healed? Why would he say that? Like it's such an obvious question. Maybe it's not. Maybe it's like us where we sometimes become addicted to our own victimization, we become addicted to our own malady. You guys as leaders, I'm sure, and you, maybe you've experienced this personally. Where you have people who you give them the tools to overcome or plow through or survive their malady or their struggle. You can tell they just aren't really ready to give it up because it's their identity. So you go, okay, wow, that's a part of this too.

00:46:13 My third one, just because this came to mind is Jesus coming home to Nazareth to preach in the synagogue, to preach the passage from Isaiah about, I've come to bring good news to the poor. And when you start to unpack the year of Jubilee and what that meant and what his hometown friends and family would have thought of him and why what he says is so offensive. We go from in just a handful of verses, people loving him and giving him permission to speak in a synagogue to wanting him dead. That is so fast, what could have happened? And when you unpack all that, it's like, oh, that makes more sense. Oh, wow, that informs this. Well, wow, that informs the rest of the season. That's the kind of stuff that you appreciate even more when you put it into the form of a story as opposed to an anecdote.

John Bytheway: 00:46:58 This is gonna sound like a pun. When I was hooked on The Chosen was the fish, the throwing the net on the other side, so to speak, because with the other disciples are running, they are sprinting. It brought me to tears watching the joy and the surprise when Peter cast the net on the other side, and then there's a brief moment where Jesus looked up. I thought he's looking up, he's saying, thank you, Father. I mean, that's what I got from it. And I just thought, oh, this ... We watched that so many times in my house over and over because we thought it was so beautifully done. And I felt differently about that thing. I bet there were smiles. I bet there was joy. I bet there was, what just happened? That that brought that to life for me.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:47:44 You bring up what remains one of my favorite scenes we've ever done. One of the reasons is my favorites is because so much of it was out of my control, some of the visual effects, the last minute nature of some of the ways that scene came together, and it reminded me that this project is bigger than I am and better than I'm capable of, which I really loved. But the music of that scene, I remember when the composers first sent it to me and it was so much different than what I kind of expected, it was so joyous. It was like, it was like an Irish jig almost, and I'm like, yes, this is what this should be. I feel like it's okay for me to say this because, as you know, I'm honored Evangelical mascot of the LDS Church. So I've been granted favor to say certain things that maybe others can't say.

00:48:25 I would say that there's such a reverence and there's such a genuine respect for Christ, which is great. You guys probably do that better than we Evangelicals do it, but sometimes it can lead to a formality, and I've seen it in paintings, I've seen it in some of the LDS videos and portrayals of Christ is very formal. He looks and sounds like he's quoting King James Bible, which he,

he is. And again, this comes from a good place of honoring scripture, fidelity to scripture. One of the things that makes a scene like what you just described really work is, A. the portrayals, of course, the acting, the fun, the winks, the laughter, some of those moments that aren't spelled out in scripture, but you know, undoubtedly it would have happened.

00:49:17 But also because of the setup and what we believe is plausible because of historical context of how desperate the Jews were to make a living under oppressive Roman occupation, what it must have been like and why Peter must have been up all night trying to fish and what are the circumstances that would have led him to be that desperate because we take the time to portray that. Then when you see the victory, when you see Christ come in and literally save the day, it's that much more meaningful and emotional. And that's what the secret sauce of the show is, is it's not a replacement for the scriptures, it's not better than the scriptures. It helps put a spotlight on those moments from scripture and personalize them and make you go, oh, of course. Because of that, you can then go, huh, my circumstances are similar to Simon's circumstances or some of the circumstances of the folks who Jesus encountered. Perhaps the answer to my struggles, the answer to my questions, to my doubts can be fulfilled in the same way that they were for them.

Hank Smith: 00:50:17 I teach the New Testament at BYU and as I was watching The Chosen, I kept saying, this is the Jesus I teach. So I hope you're right, Dallas, because this is the one I've been teaching.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:50:26 Me too. Believe you, me. Yeah. If I'm wrong, I got a lot to answer for.

Hank Smith: 00:50:30 Yeah.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:50:31 I feel like we're doing okay so far, but yeah, I've never taken my foot off the gas pedal and ever making sure that I constantly am checking myself. And that's why I have, of course, a lot of accountability among my team and my biblical scholars and whatnot just to make sure that I'm not getting so confident in my own ability because I know that I still haven't captured everything there is to know about Christ.

John Bytheway: 00:50:51 Putting a spotlight on it, immediately you wanna go get the actual account and read that again and read it now with some visuals that you've supplied. That's what I love is if that gets anybody to open the scriptures and look at it, that's awesome. And that's what it's done for me. You blessed me, blessed my children. We love watching that. To be honest, I thought, I don't

know if I can watch season six because I love this Jesus. I'm just like, this is gonna be hard to watch, but maybe, maybe that's a good thing.

- Dallas Jenkins: 00:51:24 Yeah, we hear that often. A lot of times we'll show a behind the scenes clip or I'll say something about season six and you'll hear a lot of people going, I don't know that I can watch it. I hope that people actually go through with watching it because I do think that the reasons why they're nervous to watch it are valid. It's important for us to put ourselves as much as possible into the heads and hearts of his followers. And yes, even some of his opponents to go, where do I stand? Where do I fit into this story? I will say this, yes, it's going to be painful. It's not going to be just a torture fest. In some ways, it might be harder because we've spent so much time with Jesus and with his followers in the context of the show that all it takes is a simple look from his mother or from one of his closest friends to wreck us emotionally.
- 00:52:12 I have more tools in my tool belt than the average Jesus portrayal because of the previous five seasons of relationship and world building that we've been doing. But all that to say, it should be hard. I don't think we should be shielding ourselves or our kids from the experience of the emotional and yes, even spiritual pain that we have to go through that he went through. If we can experience a taste of his suffering, we'll never fully, of course, understand it and experience it ever. To just get a taste of it is important. I think it helps us in our pursuit to be like Christ. That's something that my Catholic friends do well. We, I think all of our faith traditions have various strengths and weaknesses, and some of the times those are the same thing. Something I've learned from some of my Catholic friends, including Jonathan who plays Jesus, is that leaning into and embracing Christ's suffering is not a bad thing. In many ways, it can be a very important thing because it draws us closer to the Father. But I will say this, it will make season seven that much more exciting. You don't want to skip season six. The joy from season seven will be that much sweeter because we've experienced some of the pain of season six.
- Hank Smith: 00:53:18 To take grief out of life, you'd have to take love out of life. We experience that grief. The reunion, the rejoicing is that much more beautiful because of it.
- Dallas Jenkins: 00:53:30 The TV show isn't the end game. We're not gonna be watching TV shows in heaven. This is a gateway, this is a guide, this is a handholding, this is a supplement to what you guys are doing and what Bible does.

Hank Smith: 00:53:41 My friend, [John Hilton III](#), he has made almost a career out of helping teachers use elements of The Chosen.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:53:48 Yeah, John's great. When I see that, I go, this is exactly what we want to be done. I believe that the proof of God's hand in the storytelling of the show is in what happens when the viewers see it. If this was replacing the Bible for them, if they came away from this show going, this is a version of Jesus I like better than the Bible, therefore I'm gonna watch The Chosen instead of reading my Bible, or whatever it is, that would be a major problem, one that I would not want and would seek to correct. The good news is the only thing we hear about The Chosen when it comes to people's relationship with the Bible is that it's causing them to read it more. It's causing them to read it for the first time. It's causing them to ask more questions than they ever have.

Hank Smith: 00:54:36 We find the same thing with our show, that people would say, I'm into the scriptures more than I've ever been, which we take that as a compliment. And my sister, Chantel, out in Florida, she does not miss an episode of The Chosen. She doesn't miss any of the premieres of the movies. It's turned her into a Bible loving sister where she, she liked scripture before, I think. Sorry, Chantel, if you're, if you're listening.

Dallas Jenkins: 00:55:01 No, I believe that. I mean, I think that's true of all of us, including myself. The show for me, like, there are times, and I don't think it's wrong to admit this, where you, you open the scriptures as a duty. You're not excited about it. You've read it before. You try to get something new, you don't. Sometimes that happens. No one is successful 365 days a year at the, the Bible is the joy of my life, and I can't wait to unpack it. No, I mean, it's like no one bats a thousand when it comes to the excitement we want to have. But that's why we sometimes listen to music, attend church, and listen to pastors, and read a book, and it helps supplement, and it helps bring certain things to life more. Even I have, at times, opened the scriptures and gone, this is even more compelling and personal and emotional for me, and I'm loving it even more because I've got a picture in my head now, and I've got a little bit more context than I did before, and now something that felt a little strange or distant is feeling more personal. And it's okay. I think that's a good thing.

Hank Smith: 00:56:01 Dallas, tell us about your family and how they've taken all of this. And have they given you any ideas or does your wife say, what about this? Do you bounce ideas off of her?

- Dallas Jenkins: 00:56:13 Well, for sure. As a family, it's been really beautiful because A, we've seen God work on our own lives. I mean, when I left my job to pursue this, the moment that we officially launched it, everything went wrong in our lives. I mean, the medical bills, right after I lost all of our benefits from the job I'd had, it's like we, and I'm not exaggerating when I say this, we had 10 times the medical crises and bills in three months than we'd had in 20 years combined previously. I didn't have income. We were crowdfunding and all this. So to watch God show up during those times and to guide our family through it and to go through, and to see where things are now, it has been really beautiful to see. The other thing is we're not free from the lessons of each season. I mean, 2025 was the hardest season of our family's life.
- 00:57:00 Significant medical crises, significant relational and emotional challenges that are you know, unprecedented in our family. You'd think, well, now that the show's a global success and now that we've got more career and financial security, you're at the helm of this movement of God around the world, things are obviously gonna go better and they've gotten, at least in the flesh and our human experience, gotten much worse. It's been really beautiful as a parent to see my kids and my wife and myself, that the content of the show has at times been a reminder and a lesson. And some of the things that are in the show come out of our own personal experience that I believe God puts us through to remind us and to be in this place of, if you're gonna be portraying these stories, you need to understand them. That's been a painful but also beautiful thing to experience.
- 00:57:48 My wife is the head of our literary content, Bible studies, devotional books, kids' books. We've got a couple dozen written products that are designed to help disciple and to go deeper into these stories that my wife is at the helm of. And then when we're doing the show, a lot of times I'll run something past her, does this make sense? Does this work? What do you think of this? Quick example was, I remember in season one when Jesus is calling Simon to follow him and they're about to leave for a journey, we know from scripture Simon's mother-in-law was gravely ill. Well, that's what, of course, she tells you that Simon was married, so we get to explore his marriage in season one. I was thinking, when Jesus goes to heal her, which we see in scripture, what are some ways, again, that we can make this personal and relatable?
- 00:58:37 And that's when I was working on that scene and I thought, oh, what if Jesus is doing this less for Peter and more for Peter's

wife because Peter's about to leave and his wife is gonna be left alone caring for her mother? That's an interesting connection to the fact that Jesus recognizes that his calling on Peter, Simon at the time, is also a calling on his wife. That's when this phrase popped into my head, I see you. And Jesus telling Peter's wife, I see you. I know that this is your ministry as much as it is Simon's. I thought that was plausible and very Christlike. And I went and I tell, told Amanda, she immediately started crying. So I knew I was onto something and she said, so many spouses who are married to ministry leaders or missionaries or TV show creators oftentimes are left out of the rewards of the calling. You get to see all the feedback, you get to be out in the field, you get to experience this closeness with Christ.

00:59:41 Sometimes it comes from seeing ministry in action and spouses oftentimes feel left out or unseen, especially wives who are raising children. And I know some husbands do that as well, but predominantly wives are at home raising children when their husbands are off. And to hear, I see you, I know that this is a sacrifice for you too. She says, I believe there's gonna be people whose lives are changed all over the world. Sure enough, while we were filming it, I remember I'm walking out and our producers were like at the monitors and they're all like, oh, we were just calling our wives and we were crying. We're saying, I see you. I see you. And then we heard from people all over the world about that scene and how many people it ministered to. We always feel like if we're learning these lessons at home, if the show is an outpouring of what's God is teaching us about himself and about the scriptures, then it will impact the viewer as well.

Hank Smith: 01:00:33 John and I think often of our wives, Kim and Sara, we hear all the time don't we, John? Oh, this show is changing my life. Oh, I love your podcast. Really, our wives are the backbone of this, along with our team and their spouses.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:00:47 Yes. It's a calling for everyone. You just happen to be out front. You get the reward of people talking to you directly about the impact that it's had. It's why I try to share it with my family as much as possible of look at the life that was just changed because of the sacrifices we've made together, you know.

John Bytheway: 01:01:05 We both married above ourselves, didn't we, Hank? But that Matthew character, I just love him. He's so good at math. I mean, when he sees the fishes, he's like, wait, this doesn't make sense. It just like rocks his world. He just, I can't wrap my head around this. And then him being a Publican because he's so good at numbers and facts. I just loved it. Yeah.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:01:28 Yeah, that's the kind of thing that you unpack as you're studying the characters is you start looking at character traits and how do we, what can we mine from scripture that can inform our portrayal of a human being? You wanna start with scripture first. You find little things, little hints that explain who these people might be. And when you're putting it together with Matthew, and I, I'm very familiar with autism and Asperger's and it's in my family and I've done a lot of volunteer work in it. And so I just know it very well. And I'm like, oh, this is interesting. These are traits of someone on the spectrum. Wouldn't that be-

Hank Smith: 01:02:02 Wouldn't that be interesting?

Dallas Jenkins: 01:02:03 ... disruptive to portray a Bible character as being on the spectrum. It's not impossible. It's so humanizing we would put that decision on the Mount Rushmore of the top decisions that we've made that have most connected people to the show. All over the world, Matthew, that character is second only to Jesus in terms of the connection that people have had and the number of people who have autism in their family had the number of people that's spoken to and made them realize if Jesus calls everybody to follow him and yes, to even lead sometime. Yeah, that was for sure a God moment.

John Bytheway: 01:02:35 You credit Amanda for that.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:02:37 Yeah, she cast Paras and then part of because some of the struggling he was having in his audition just felt very Matthew-esque. But here's what's fun too, is you get to then develop a character arc over the course of multiple seasons and Matthew as someone who is on the spectrum, season five, he's saying, things that surprise me, I'm okay with because it leads to more learning, and I know I need that. I don't handle surprise very well, but I know it's good for me. Shock, on the other hand, makes me question what I've understood previously. And Jesus says, or he says, above all you seek understanding, and Matthew says, above all I seek you. Jesus says, well, then you already understand. But that moment alone, just emotionally even thinking about it, but it's like to get to that place where you're willing to just say, I can't always understand. We all have limits. For me, it's my brain and that I'm on the spectrum and I can't ... So I have to make a choice either to only follow the things that make sense in my structured brain, or I'm willing to seek you and follow whatever you say. And to see that happen to Matthew over the course of multiple seasons, I think is what can give the viewer a sense of intention and hope as well.

John Bytheway: 01:03:49 Oh that's beautiful. One of the things that's always intrigued me is Peter saying, well, I go a fishing. Okay, we'll go with you. And I'm wondering how you're gonna portray that was Peter just thinking, well, I guess we go back to our former life.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:04:05 We certainly get into this idea of, told me to go to Galilee, don't know exactly why, I gotta provide for my family. There's no more ministry now that's being supported. Again, that's where you look at the scripture and you go, okay, it doesn't tell us what's in his head, but you have to assume that he's going back fishing because he's got no choice. If not him, who? He's got a wife to provide for. And he can't wait around per se. They gotta eat, they gotta provide, we get to explore some of that for sure. Also, and I don't wanna give too much away, but there's the question of who Jesus appears to when. There's a plausible narrative when you construct the timeline of The Gospels, because it is hard to synchronize sometimes. But what if Jesus physically appeared to multiple people before he appeared to Peter?

01:05:02 Peter's supposed to be the rock, the leader, but yet he shows himself to multiple people before he shows himself to Peter. We wanna portray a little bit of that of maybe Peter's doubting himself going, is Jesus punishing me for denying him three times? And that beautiful scene on the shore, I know scholars have different opinions over what was meant by Jesus asking him if he loved him three times and fishing, the repeat of the put your net on the other side of the boat, all of these things. I personally think that at least part of it is that Jesus is giving Peter three chances to be redeemed from the three times he denied him. He was asked, do you know Jesus? And he said no three times. Well, now he's being asked, do you love me? three times. I thought there's something cinematic about that, that I perceive as he's going, you fell three times.

01:05:53 I'm gonna give you three redemptions. In addition to some of the theology about feed my lambs, and I mean, there's a lot of this stuff that you guys, I'm sure, have unpacked many times that we have some time to explore and play with. There's a lot of mystery about, why is he fishing again? Well, okay, why wouldn't he be fishing? He's gotta do something. We definitely explore all of that. You can always count on The Chosen to, at the very least, whether it's right or wrong, whether you agree or disagree, I'm sure in five seasons of television, there's been some things you guys would've done differently. You can always at least count on, we're going to explore the humanity and the reality and the authenticity of it and then leave the theology, which will be imbued into some of it, of course, but that's for

you guys to then unpack, you know, and use the show and the Bible as a place to unpack all of that. That will definitely give you the human reality of what would have taken place during that time.

Hank Smith: 01:06:48 Beautiful. Dallas, let's point to some of the places where people can get [The Chosen](#) and also the other projects that you are doing that people might not even know about. Those who love the show, they might not know about the animated series or the books. Can you go through all of those?

Dallas Jenkins: 01:07:01 Yeah. As we speak, I'm putting some of the finishing touches on some episodes of our Joseph miniseries. This is a project that we filmed last year. It's an eight-part miniseries, meaning it's not a multi-season show, it's one season, and it's called Joseph of Egypt, and it's the story of Joseph of the Old Testament. This is one that I didn't personally show run. The showrunner is the one who kind of oversees the writing and the filmmaking. I'm the final say. It's ultimately my project, my company's project, so I supervised our showrunner and our directors, and obviously everything ultimately has to go through me and it has to pass our biblical consultants and all of that. That's a project that was financed and will be distributed by Prime Video, Amazon Prime Video sometime in 2027. We wanna always communicate that the Old Testament and the New Testament are very inherently linked, but now we get a chance to really explore it even further.

01:07:57 We've got the animated show that's out right now, so the first season is on Prime Video also. [The Chosen Adventures](#) is the name of it. We release first, at least by the time people are listening to this podcast, I'm gonna think there's probably five or six episodes released on YouTube. You just search for The Chosen Adventures on YouTube and you'll find it. We release one episode every few weeks. That's been really cool because the response to that has been overwhelming. Adults as well loving it because it's showing, we took the characters of Joshua and Abby, Abigail from episode three of season one, where Jesus meets a group of children. Those two are kind of and what happens after they met Jesus and their lives in, as children in Capernaum and experiencing some of the stories of Jesus, but also just their own lives as kids and some of the biblical truths and moral truths that we really get to explore in a different medium of animation.

01:08:50 So there's more humor. There's more kids as young as two years old can appreciate a show like this where The Chosen, although The Chosen has appealed to far more young kids than I

expected, anyone under the age of six, seven, eight is gonna have a hard time understanding a lot of it, but The Chosen Adventures is a little bit more geared towards that. When you go to thechosengifts.com, I don't wanna give a bunch of websites, you can just look it up. It's not difficult to find, but you look for our gift store. We really make sure that all of our gifts, we call them gifts, not merch, because we're not trying to just sell product here. We really want these to be given away. We want you to go deeper into the stories, even when we have a t-shirt. The t-shirt will have phrases on it or things that are designed to raise questions to start conversations, to not just promote the show, but to start a cultural conversation about Jesus that doesn't normally happen. And so a lot of people who watch the show aren't aware of that. And when they are aware of it, it really does engage you even more and take you deeper into scripture and makes it easier to do the same with your friends and family.

- Hank Smith: 01:09:48 Yeah. In fact, one of your shirts has a nice saying on the back that John and I like. It's called [Follow Him](#) right on the back.
- Dallas Jenkins: 01:09:55 Yes. Yes. I'd like to say you guys gave us some sponsorship money for that, but I missed the boat. I didn't get a chance to do that. Very direct. The front of the shirt is a quote from Matthew in season four where he says, I have only one thing to do each day. Follow him. So on the back, it just says, follow him. And we'll be pointing people to your show hopefully.
- Hank Smith: 01:10:20 Who's the character that surprised you the most as the story unfolded, something you didn't see coming?
- Dallas Jenkins: 01:10:26 I would say Pontius Pilate, we always knew we wanted to explore his story as well, because it's really fascinating. When you think about this supposedly powerful man is faced with this decision that should be fairly innocuous. It's one person, and he punts. He doesn't make a decision either way. He just kind of says, alright, I'm washing my hands of it, but I'll let you guys handle it yourselves, and yes, we'll cooperate. He doesn't make a definitive decision. We started looking at the history of it, and you go, huh, Pilate, there's not a whole lot in the scriptures about him. He could have been any age. In fact, it was entirely plausible that he was younger. In the position that he was in, it wouldn't have necessarily been a military position. It could have just been a political one. He's clearly in over his head.
- 01:11:17 He did some things that, that got him in trouble even with his superiors. Like Tiberius was very angry at Pilate for overreacting. At one point, he ordered the slaughtering of a

bunch of Jewish potential rebels, and it got him in trouble with the Romans. The Romans were like, no, no, dude, that's not what we want. "Like, he was almost on probation in some ways. He meets Jesus and is like, he doesn't seem like a threat. I know a threat when I see one. Why can't I just let him go? And they're like, no. And he's just forced into this situation he doesn't wanna be in. The portrayal made sense and we started to lean into that. You see a Pilate that initially for some people was very hard to under- they were like, he feels young. There's a personality about him that for a lot of viewers was very, so surprising they had a hard time with it.

01:12:01 And now it has really, for a lot of viewers, I think, would say, they would answer the same to your question of like, I did not expect that, but then over time it started to make more sense. When you see it in season six, when you see him finally meet Jesus, and when you see him finally face this decision where hundreds of people are screaming at him, it, I think, will be more impactful and relatable and I think the scripture will make even more sense than ever before.

John Bytheway: 01:12:26 Dallas, you know who got me was Nicodemus. I loved his portrayal. I loved that he is so conflicted. He's like, hey, I'm presenting at a symposium, but he wants to go listen to Jesus. There's a scene where his wife says, I love our life. I just thought, man, how could I give this up if I really... So he goes to visit John the Baptist and I just thought his portrayal was so good and you brought things out in that whole thing about trying to keep my marriage and my prestige together, but what if Jesus really is Messiah?

Dallas Jenkins: 01:13:07 He's got his foot in both religious leadership, which we wanted to portray. He's got his foot in belief in Jesus. The scriptures mentioned that he met Jesus at night. He didn't make his belief in Jesus public. Why would that be? Well, it's okay, that makes sense. He's a leader. Think of what he would have had to give up. And so a lot of the things that we came up with to show both why he would consider Jesus as Messiah when everyone else around him isn't, and then also why he wouldn't give up his life to follow Jesus. That was a really, really fascinating thing to portray. And as a viewer, it should be a reminder to us when we read Bible stories to think about that context and to go, okay, so John chapter three, it's the most famous chapter in the Bible, includes the most famous verse in the Bible, but there's a whole large amount of things going on around that that are just as interesting that can put a spotlight on it.

Hank Smith: 01:14:05 Love that humility there too of, yeah, this is my portrayal.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:14:09 Oh yeah, yeah. That's why we say it before episode one. It's, I mean, like the, and I say it all the time, I am not God. Jonathan is not Jesus. This show is not the Bible. Even when we make jokes sometimes on social media and someone will go, oh, that's blasphemous, or well, you know, we're like, no, no, no. Blasphemy is blaspheming against the real Jesus. This is Jonathan on set. He's an actor. He's a human being. He's flawed. I'm flawed. We're making jokes about ourselves. Sometimes we're doing it so that you can better separate us from the real thing. We don't want you to be swayed from what the real thing is because we definitely know the difference.

Hank Smith: 01:14:40 This question will make sense then to try to separate actors and directors from the actual Bible. Something that's happened behind the scenes, funny mishap, something happened where you, you might go, oh, man, you wouldn't have believed this went wrong.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:14:56 I mean, we've had the really wonderful moments of, I know people always love to hear this, that almost without exception, whenever the actors are quoting scripture, so a lot of their dialogue isn't directly from scripture, but when it is or when they're reenacting a moment where Jesus is calling them or asking them to choose to believe in Him or not or healing them or even rebuking them, a lot of the actors end up having abnormally emotional experiences that are even outside of what the scene called for that I think helps prove that scripture does not return void, that even when it's in the context of a performance on a set, that scripture makes a difference. And we've had a lot of people on our set cast and crew be dramatically impacted by something directly from scripture. The funny stuff, the quirky stuff is, it's the stuff that keeps us sane.

01:15:49 I mean, I think of like the miracle of the fish that you mentioned, John, that you loved when he puts the net on the other side of the boat. The ridiculousness of filming that scene where we're using a, what we call a green burrito, it's a green tarp that has green water balloons inside of it to add weight and floating to help it float. And we put that in a net and we tell the actors, push this green tarp filled with green water balloons into the boat. And if you can do that, that'll be successful because later we're gonna replace that green with a bunch of fish. They're grabbing onto the tarp and you're like, no, no, you can't do that because those are gonna be fish sometime. See, these crazy things that are so ridiculous in the filming of the walking on water and how they're suspended by wires and then they're falling into the water sometimes and all these things that are so clunky. Even when we're filming the Crucifixion, there are times

when Jonathan and I have to just, otherwise we'll just be miserable for, you know, months at a time, but where we're cracking some jokes just to keep us sane.

Hank Smith: 01:16:53 You talked earlier about that you don't wanna feel like, hey, I'm the canon. You do feel like God has pressed things on your heart. All of these pieces, all of these people coming together, do you feel like there are moments where you think, wow, that actor was prepared for this moment?

Dallas Jenkins: 01:17:14 I mean, it has happened with such mind numbing regularity. I've stopped being surprised by it. I mean, I don't even know where to begin. I mean, like Liz who plays Mary Magdalene, Paras, who plays Matthew, are just two examples of people who, as they were receiving the offer to do this role, they were giving up the business. They were realizing they had no, they didn't have a place in this business because they kept running against walls and they were in a low place, emotionally, spiritually, career-wise. Jonathan, who plays Jesus, he has a similar story to my five and two story where he was at the absolute end. I mean, just like God, I can't do this anymore. I'm drawing it my way. I give it up. I surrender. I'm done. And then God shows up in this way financially, and then two weeks later, he gets the call from me about The Chosen.

01:18:05 The actor who plays Ezekiel, for example, in that very strange scene in season five when Jesus has a vision in the valley of dry bones and encounters Ezekiel, and the guy shows up on set. This will sound like I'm making it up, but he's like, you know, I never know when people show up on set actors where they stand spiritually. I mean, the majority of them are not Christians, but every now and then someone will come up and they'll, I'll say, hi, nice to meet you. I'm Dallas. And, you know, this is what we're doing today. And they'll start to have tears in their eyes talking about how much the show has impacted their lives. This guy auditioned I think two years before and I just found the audition and he looked interesting and had a, had a good heart. And so I cast him.

01:18:45 He's like, I did this audition two years ago, forgot about it, and then I get the call. The day that I got the call, my devotions were in the book of Ezekiel, and I'm, and I'm unpacking this passage of Ezekiel, and then they tell me, they go, hey, we got a role for you. And, oh, great. It's with The Chosen. Oh my gosh, my favorite show. You're gonna be playing Ezekiel. And he's like, what are you kidding me? And he shows up and that moment with him and Jonathan and this emotional moment, I mean, that was real. These guys are before the roll in camera telling

each other their stories and having this powerful thing. And that happens all the time, the actor who plays Moses had a moment when he was visiting Israel and he had this profound spiritual connection to it and felt like God was pressing stuff on his heart.

01:19:30 And it was like a month later I cast him as Moses. Things like that just happen all the time. So many times I or our company have tried to do something, a partnership with another company or a decision on a date or a location, and we go all the way through it to, to that point, and we call them Red Sea moments, where we're at the edge of the Red Sea. In fact, the first time my wife used that term was with the LDS Church when we were gonna be using the LDS set in Goshen, Utah. It was the only place we were gonna be able to film season two because everything else was closed down during COVID and there's no places in the States that work and we're looking overseas and that's not working. And then the church told us, no, can't use it. And I'm like, man, that's weird. I thought God had put it on my heart to use this set and I'd visited it and felt like God was speaking to me and telling me lives are gonna change with the work you do on this set. And then they said no. And I'm like, I guess I was wrong. And Amanda my wife goes, no, I think this is just God taking you to the edge of the Red Sea so that when the water's part, you'll know it's him.

01:20:28 Four days later, I'm on a Zoom call with two of the Elders of the church and somehow we got ahold of them and God had been put it on their hearts to watch The Chosen even though they hadn't previously. And it was like, within five days, President Nelson said yes. I was ready to go somewhere else. I mean, it was just so many times where God brings us to the edge of the Red Sea and then he goes, yeah, I got this. And he parts the waters and we go, gosh, I'm so glad our ideas didn't work out. So that happens over and over and over again, and it's no doubt happening today in a way that I don't even know.

Hank Smith: 01:20:58 Oh, that's beautiful. The same thing happens in our show. We'll invite a guest on and they'll say, you know, I needed this at this moment, this was happening.

John Bytheway: 01:21:09 All of it is such a testimony that God wants these stories told. That's what I love. He's working on everybody. Just makes me so happy and it's thank you for your testimony of that, Dallas, that this happens all the time. This isn't well, once or twice in seven years, nope, it happens all the time.

Hank Smith: 01:21:30 I had a question that came into my head, Dallas. The show is called The Chosen. What does it feel like to you to be chosen to do this?

Dallas Jenkins: 01:21:43 It's pretty overwhelming. If I try to think too hard about it, it becomes too weighty and I try to appreciate it. The Chosen refers to in the, as the title of the show, three things. Jesus is the chosen one, the Jews is God's chosen people, and then the followers that he chose to come alongside him in his ministry. And every now and then, someone will say something like what you said is, must be overwhelming or must be exciting to be chosen to do this. I don't know if it's good that I'm not very good at stopping and thinking about these kinds of things too often. I just never have been very good at it. People will come on set and they'll go, how's it going? I'm like, I don't know yet. This day's not over. The season's not over. Like until it's finished, I don't get comfortable because there's, it's just so hard.

01:22:31 There's so many opportunities to screw it up between now and the end of season seven that I just don't have time. I just keep the hand to the plow. When it's all over, maybe I'll look up and go, wow. Throughout the course of the filming of it, you get these moments where God gives you the grace to know what to celebrate. When you're in another country and someone is telling you in a different language how the show has changed their life and the privilege that I have of having a front row seat of what God is doing all over the world, the lives that are being changed, I can't even, I don't even know where to begin with it. It's not like I'm not aware of it. It's just that I, I wanna take it as a gesture of like God just saying, keep going, keep going. This is why you're doing it. I don't know why. I don't know why he chose me. I can't wait to ask. I'm too busy trying to just make sure I stay out of the way.

Hank Smith: 01:23:21 Just make sure it works.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:23:22 Yeah, exactly.

Hank Smith: 01:23:24 Wow, that, you've put towards something that I feel often. I know John feels it often. I don't know why I get to be part of this, but I love it.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:23:32 Yeah. There's just as many times where you go, if I'd known it was gonna bring with it, demonic oppression, cancer, loss of people close to me, at times dozens of YouTube videos calling you a heretic with millions of views or saying things that aren't even true. I mean, all of those things you go, well, would I have done it if I'd known that was gonna happen? I don't know. I'd

like to think I would've. I think God made me in a way that I'm not as impacted by those kinds of things, I don't know, but I think there's a part of how God makes you that he just goes, I've broken you down. I've done the work I needed to do and you, now you're ready for this, and then I'm gonna keep reminding you of it throughout. So it's not all just rainbows and unicorns.

- John Bytheway: 01:24:17 Well, this is why I, I loved your message was when it's wildly successful, you are saying, no, I just keep bringing my five and two. I'm gonna let God do all of the... He'll take the weight of all the big stuff. I'm just gonna keep bringing my five and two. One of the reasons I respect you so much is because you're not letting it get to you. You're just, no, I just keep bringing my five and two.
- Dallas Jenkins: 01:24:43 Yeah, I have to. I know I'm not this good. I'm able to talk about some of the things that the show has done in a truly objective way with no arrogance going, I'm not good enough to do a show that... There was some family that when, before it had even been translated in their language and their kids are like loving season one and wanting more. And I'm like, they don't even understand the language. All these words that I was so proud of having written, they don't even understand them anyway. I know that I'm not good enough to transcend that kind of thing. I know that I'm not good enough to make a show that hundreds of millions of people all wanna watch and that changes their lives. It actually should be somewhat easy to remain humble because it's like, oh gosh, I remember when I was sitting on my laptop on my couch at 3:00 in the morning writing this scene and I felt good about it, but like, I know I'm not good enough to transcend art and life for so many people. I'm like, it's just, I just gotta stay on my laptop, on my couch at 3:00 in the morning and just make sure that I'm doing the best I can.
- Hank Smith: 01:25:38 Oh, wow. You just described my little experience here. Someone will say, that guest changed my life. We have a guest every week. And I think I chose that guest and I did not, I am not good enough to know exactly who to choose to bring that person on. It's just been beautiful to be a part of, really. You just feel like you're almost being a spectator.
- John Bytheway: 01:25:58 Hey, Dallas, you mentioned Ezekiel and that scene. Can you elaborate on that and that connection to Christ and to what we're talking about, Easter today?
- Dallas Jenkins: 01:26:08 Yeah, because I know you guys love to talk about the connection from the Old Testament to the New and especially how it relates to Easter. When Jesus was in the garden, we

thought it could be really interesting to show him in his desperation to the Father, asking for relief, asking for comfort, asking for an escape even, saying, but not my will, but yours be done. To see moments in the Old Testament of hope, of renewal. For example, we show this flashback to Abraham, Abraham and Isaac and what sacrifice looks like. And Jesus is saying, oh, he didn't ultimately sacrifice Isaac. We released him from that test. What do you have for me, Father, in this? Ezekiel's one of my favorites. I mean, there's this wonderful, wonderful passage in Ezekiel where Ezekiel's talking to God and God says to him, "Son of man, human prophet, can these bones live?" And Ezekiel says, "Oh, Lord, only you know." Then what follows the answer to that is so cool. We don't answer it in that moment in the Garden of Gethsemane. I don't want to spoil anything, but I'll just say to the people who go, that scene felt a little out of context. And what is that? Just know we're not done yet. There's moments in the Old Testament that talk about renewal and resurrection and life that indicate that Jesus' resurrection was not an ad lib. It was not an audible. It had been part of the story from the beginning and Jesus's resurrection had breadcrumbs that had been left throughout the course of history.

- Hank Smith: 01:27:44 That's a beautiful way to say that. Breadcrumbs.
- Dallas Jenkins: 01:27:48 When I said it, I wasn't even thinking of the fact that he's the bread of life, so it's even more, even more poignant. I'm smarter than I thought I was.
- Hank Smith: 01:27:54 Just another example of, wow, I, I'm not smart enough to do that.
- Dallas Jenkins: 01:27:58 Yeah, no, exactly. That's the cocky way of saying it. No, I'm, I'm more open to God's teaching than I thought I was. Maybe, maybe that's a better way to say it.
- Hank Smith: 01:28:06 I love it. We're grateful for your time, your testimony, your goodness, you exude goodness.
- Dallas Jenkins: 01:28:13 That's a perfect phrase in relation to what I'm saying, which is I'm like, if I exude goodness, it is only because God is good and I'm just a filter. You know, so I appreciate you saying that. I also think it's, I think it's so important for us to always be recognizing where the goodness comes from.
- Hank Smith: 01:28:31 Absolutely. Right. John, did you ever think that you were gonna get this opportunity? How did we, how did we get this job?

John Bytheway: 01:28:39 Right. Whenever I watch The Chosen now, I think, yeah, I met that guy. It was over my MacBook Pro, but I met that guy.

Hank Smith: 01:28:46 We just chatted for an hour or two, just enjoyed ourselves. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 01:28:50 My wife peeked in, said hi.

Hank Smith: 01:28:51 Yeah. That's just beautiful.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:28:53 Oh, no, it was my pleasure.

Hank Smith: 01:28:54 Dallas, please thank Amanda for your time. We recognize that, that when you're here with us, you're not there with her, so.

Dallas Jenkins: 01:29:04 Well, I'm gonna go be with her now and get some more work done, but thank you, thank you so much for having me on. It's a, it's a pleasure. One of the great joys of my experience on The Chosen has been getting to know so many people in the LDS church that I never would've known otherwise that I've always felt so loved and appreciated, and it's been a great, great relationship. It's gonna continue.

Hank Smith: 01:29:24 With that, we want to thank Dallas Jenkins, the creator of The Chosen for being with us today. We wanna thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. In every episode, we remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're gonna keep walking through the Old Testament on followHIM. As a thank you to our wonderful listeners, we'd love to gift you the digital version of our book, Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. It offers short, meaningful insights drawn from our past Old Testament episodes. Visit followhim.co, that's followhim.co To download your free copy today, and you'll also find the link to purchase the print edition. Thank you for being part of our followHIM family. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Heather Barlow, Amelia Kabwika, Sydney Smith, and Anabelle Sorensen.

followHIM Favorites



- Hank Smith: 00:03 Hello, welcome to followHIM Favorites. This is where John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's Come, Follow Me lesson. John, it's Easter here at followHIM. I thought I would share with you a story that I think will speak to what we all hope. We hope and expect that our loved ones who we have lost are interested in us. We will have those reunions one day. This story was told by our friend, Robert Millet, who has been on our podcast many times. He starts his story this way. He says, "Answers to prayer usually come in quiet ways to mortals through the mediation of the Holy Spirit and through the intervention of other mortals. There are times, however, when God chooses to do the unusual." He says, "This is an intensely personal experience." He was talking about he and his wife. They were praying for one of their children because this child, this son, had completely separated himself, not just from the church, but from his family entirely. He became addicted to drugs and buried himself in a hellish world that held out little hope for him. John, not just like religion, but life.
- John Bytheway: 01:18 To live, yeah.
- Hank Smith: 01:20 To have a happy life. He said they tried to reach out to him. Where is he? Is he in prison? Is he lost? He said we didn't hear from him for months. Can you imagine, John? As a father and mother, the worry and the pain. Here's what Bob says. One night, as Shauna and I knelt in prayer, broken and torn emotionally from worry, we wept through our prayers and pleaded long and hard once again for the Good Shepherd to lead his wandering sheep home. He says we went to bed and slept in sorrow. Sometime that night, I found myself dreaming. My father, who had passed away several years before, came to me in my dream, embraced me. Both you and I know Bob well. He is a careful teacher. He is not prone to hyperbole. When Bob told this story, I thought, "Wow." He said, "My father came to me in the dream, embraced me, looked me in the eye and said quite forcefully, son, pull yourself together. I am going to help you with those children of yours. Be patient. I woke immediately and sat up in my bed. My movement awakened my

wife Shauna. What's wrong? What happened? I explained that I had seen dad in a dream and he had told me he would help with our son.

02:47 Days later, the phone rang in the middle of the night. Our son's voice. I can't live like this anymore. Can I come home? We were thrilled to hear from him and grateful that he was alive. We felt no need to set terms or specify conditions. We simply welcomed him home with tenderness. One evening, a few weeks later, he and I were sitting on the sofa in the living room and he turned to me and said hesitantly, Dad, I need to share something with you. I encouraged him to tell me. He continued, this is gonna sound strange. But one night, sometime back, I was on the verge of doing something that would've cost me my life. Dad," I think he thinks it's a little weird, John. "He says, Dad, I heard Grandpa Millet. I heard his voice say, don't you do that. You have been taught better. Now, get up and go home." This is back to the son. "Dad, I know that sounds weird. Could that possibly be true? With some emotion, I answered it was not weird and added, I have a story to tell you. I then told him of my dream. We both felt the Spirit resting upon us and sensed that the entire experience was true and from God."

04:16 Is that beautiful, John? When we think of Easter, we think of our loved ones who have passed on. And Bob's story is yet another testament that they're interested in us.

John Bytheway: 04:27 They're gone physically, but they're not gone. It reminds me of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's statement, "Do not underestimate your family on the other side of the veil."

Hank Smith: 04:39 Wow.

John Bytheway: 04:40 They're interested.

Hank Smith: 04:41 They're interested and working.

John Bytheway: 04:43 On our behalf.

Hank Smith: 04:45 Well, we hope everyone listening will have a happy, wonderful Easter. We have a treat this week. If you'll come over to our full podcast, we're with the director of The Chosen. His name is Dallas Jenkins. Not a member of our church, but a faithful believer in Christ.

John Bytheway: 04:59 Absolutely.

Hank Smith:

05:00

You are gonna love what he has to say, not only about his show, but about the Easter season. And then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.