

Come Follow Me Class Insights, 19, D&C Sec. 46, 47, 48

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler, and I'm Alex Baugh. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 46, 47 and 48. And we'd like to welcome our friend Alex Baugh from Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. It's a real delight to be with him today, and we look forward to talking and sharing with you these beautiful scriptures that God has revealed for us.

So, to begin, Alex, what do you think is important for us to understand about the setting. What's going on? What happened the day before Section 46? What's going on with the Church before we actually dive into the words?

Well, I think it's important to remember, Joseph Smith's only been here a month. This is a new environment for him. We have individuals and members that have been – have joined the Church as the result of the missionaries to the Lamanites. Joseph – these are new people and they're excited to have Joseph Smith with them and they are grateful to have and receive his revelatory direction. So this is the beginning, really, this is some of the early revelations that begin now in the Ohio period to help us understand how to direct the Church during this very much a change-over time, and we're, of course, anticipating that the New York saints will be arriving within a few months.

So we're kind of in a transition period here, and these individuals are former members of another church. They're Campbellites, they're Methodists, they're Unitarian, they're bringing that tradition and that doctrine and those practices and beliefs with them. Exactly. So they need guidance, they need direction. How do we even conduct Church meetings? And section 46 starts laying that out just a little bit, very general, but at the same time helping them understand the most important thing is the role of the Holy Ghost. So this is a very important revelation and then, of course, we can come in – go into the spiritual gifts as well that Joseph would like to of course share.

So just for background information here, you'll notice in verse 5 that it mentions them not casting any out of your sacrament meetings who are earnestly seeking the kingdom, and then in verse 6 it says: "And again I say unto you, concerning your confirmation meetings." What would you say about that – sacrament meetings – confirmation meetings? So our Church today, we can relate to verse 5 but we read verse 6 and say, what is the confirmation meeting?

Yeah, good point, and it's a good question. In the early Church they would be received by baptism, and sometimes that was right after hearing a preacher preach. Right, on the -- the Latter-day Saint elders – the Church elders speak and they would be baptized, and then in section 20 it said that after they manifest the godly walk and conversation, they are to be received in terms of -- they are to receive the Holy Ghost. So it wasn't always the practice that they would be baptized, then immediately receive the Holy Ghost; they would have a meeting in which now the

individual has manifested this godly walk and conversation and they could now be – receive the gift of the Holy Ghost in a formal – in a confirmation.

So one of the practices that had started to kind of creep in was an exclusionary effort to say, if you're not a member of the Church, you can't participate in this confirmation meeting, or, if we think you're unworthy, we're going to kick you out of our sacrament meeting, and that caused some of the early Church members to say, wait a minute, I'm reading in 3rd Nephi and Jesus says, don't cast anybody out of your meetings. But he does say, if you know they're not worthy, don't administer my sacrament to these people who you know aren't worthy, but don't kick them out of your meeting. And so, there's – there's this difference in practice compared to the doctrine in the Book of Mormon and some confusion. Section 46 really answers all of those questions for these – for these early saints.

Yes, they want the members to be there. The Lord wants the members to be there. In fact, he says, "But not withstanding those things" in verse 2, "which are written, it always has been given to the elders of my church from the beginning, and ever shall be, to conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless ye are commanded never to cast out from you, from your public meetings, which are held before the world." And again, you hit that right on the head, 3rd Nephi 18, I think that's what they're referring to, the Lord is referring to – this has been written, ye should know that you're never to cast anyone out who belongs to the Church. Let them come to church. They need church. They need to worship with the saints.

Absolutely. Elder and Sister Renlund wrote a great book on the Melchizedek Priesthood, and in there they talk about how to administer things in the Church.¹ So for Church leaders, whether it be a bishop or a stake president or any other calling in the Church, they use this beautiful analogy that I love that my stake president Clint Mortensen has shared with us multiple times, it's just really profound, from that book. The Renlunds shared this analogy of a playing boundary, whether you're talking about soccer or American football or basketball or volleyball, it doesn't matter, there are going to be boundaries, and so they list one of the boundaries as the scriptures, so you look for how to administer the meetings, the organization of the Church, look to the scriptures. An example: 3rd Nephi 18, right here. There's a boundary there. It guides us. Then you have the words of the living prophets to help guide you and create a boundary. You have the handbooks of instruction, or, in this case, it's the handbook of instruction² today that we have, and then you have the direction of local file leaders that help govern the work. There you go. And then you have this big area that you can navigate with the help of the Holy Ghost. It's a really powerful model for us to understand.

¹ Renlund, Dale G., and Ruth Lybbert Renlund. *The Melchizedek Priesthood: Understanding the Doctrine, Living the Principles*. Deseret Book, 2018.

² Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, The. "General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 2021, www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/title-page?lang=eng.

Today, in the 21st century, this is easier than it is in 1831 when the Church isn't even yet one year old. They have the scriptures, but they don't have them electronically and they don't have a lot of the resources that we do to look up in an instant, where does it say this? And you search for key words. They've got it, but it's a little harder to access. They've got living prophets, but they have less access to that living prophet, depending on where he is. The handbook, it's starting to come together, and as Alex was saying, those local leaders that have been called, they still brought with them some traditions and some practices and doctrines that may not always be accurate, and so we're developing this. So I love verse 2 that Alex already read, that it really – it really provides a beautiful foundation, not just for them in 1831, but for us in the 21st century, that regardless of whatever else has been written, it's given to you as a leader in the Church, to govern the meetings as the Spirit directs within a certain boundary or border of limitations. You've got a lot of – a lot of room to navigate here.

So if you were in Kirtland, and they would probably say Church will be held at the Isaac Morley school house, be there at 10:00 a.m., and of course they just had to kind of flow, they didn't know who would show up, they didn't have probably any guest speakers, they – maybe Joseph once in a while – but this was again, very Spirit-directed. We just didn't have the protocols that we have today. So just be guided by the Spirit and you'll be fine.

Now we jump in. Look at verse 7: "You are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men; for some are of men, and others of devils." You'll notice he gave you three things there: not be seduced by evil spirits, the doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men. So you have what the Lord wants and heaven-directed stuff, but then you've got these three sources of other opposition to what God wants, and you've got to believe that the devil's not giving these people a free pass right now. This Church is starting to take root and gr – you've got to believe that he's doing everything he can to try to thwart this work.

Yeah, he's going to manifest some very deceptive kinds of spiritual manifestations to kind of throw off these members. Now we'll get more of this with section 50, but I think the Lord's giving Joseph and the Church a little bit of a heads up, that we've got to be cautious here about some of the things that might be manifest that are certainly not of me – or not of God.

I love that, Alex, the idea that we don't need to feel fear. We don't need to sit back and feel like a spiritual victim of what the devil can do. Yes, he is going to fight against whatever good efforts we're making as an individual, as a family, as a ward, as a stake, as a Church, as a community, as a nation, as a world. There's going to be opposition, but don't you love the fact that verse 7 opened with a command to turn to God, to look up in faith rather than down in fear?

You know, human beings generally walk the direction they're facing, and so if we put so much fearful attention downward, we're probably going to gravitate that direction. If we spend more

time searching the internet for the philosophies of men, the doctrines of men, or the commandments of men, we're going to start gravitating that direction, and we're going to tune our ears and our eyes to those sources and those people, and, quite frankly, they may not always be tuned into the right source. So I love the fact that verse 7 gives us this gentle, yet profound, command to ask God and to look to him with holiness of heart, walking uprightly before him, considering the end of our salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving.

In my mind it just creates this image of not just individuals, but a collective body of people who are saying, I get it. I understand it. We aren't going to be able to do this on our own. We need help. Lord, we're here, use us as an instrument to build up thy kingdom according to thy plan, and we'll do our best. We're not going to be perfect, but we're going to do our best, with holiness of heart we move forward. And that's what I see happening today with our current prophets and apostles and leaders of the Church, is them doing exactly what you see here in this first part of verse 7.

And if we do that, there will not - you will not be deceived. And then of course he now brings in, and I think this is where we need to go with this, Tyler, but any God-fearing Christian would have been very much acquainted with Paul's teachings on the gifts of the Spirit. And if they've read the Book of Mormon and read that last chapter, they'll realize that Moroni had a lot to say about the gifts of the Spirit, too, so I think it's wonderful that the Lord would tie in - now at this point of this section, that here's some of the gifts of the Spirit that you have to exercise in the Church so that you are not deceived, and that these are true manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit that he's talked about with - by Paul, as mentioned by Paul and also by Moroni.

So let me just make this simple list here. You've got the three places. Now, gifts of the Spirit are mentioned, and they're alluded to in many places throughout our scriptural canon. But these are the three sections, the three chapters, where it actually goes into depth and gives you a list.

Your shortest list by far, is here in 1 Corinthians 12, and then you get some longer lists. But by my count, Doctrine and Covenants 46 is kind of, for me, it's the most complete list of the gifts of the Spirit in a general, over-arching sense. Now, there are lots of spiritual - er, lots of gifts, and we'll talk about those in a moment, but this is a real gem, like you were saying, for these people who were very familiar with these two, or familiar at least, with these two passages, you get some clarification here.

Well, the gifts of the Spirit are very important for the Church to understand, and obviously the Lord wanted that understanding conveyed through the Prophet Joseph Smith in these - it's elucidated in section 46. I count thirteen, but like you say, I think they're a little bit more descriptive in many aspects than in Moroni and also in 1 Corinthians 12, so kind of an amplification of Paul and Moroni.

Very good. So now let's pick up verse 9: "For verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who," now notice the qualifiers here, "those who love me and keep all my

commandments." Now let's pause there. How many of you are thinking, wait a minute, I'm disqualified. Don't you love the fact that the next phrase is placed there, "and him that seeketh so to do." Brothers and sisters, I've highlighted very profoundly those words, "seeketh so to do."

In the current temple recommend interview questions, I love the fact that we have the word strive. Do you strive? What's your intent? "Seeketh so to do," exactly, you're trying, you're striving, you're doing your very best, certainly we're all falling short. That gives us all hope, "that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a sign that they may consume it upon their lusts." God is not in the business of helping us put on magic shows to impress people or to try to build faith through miraculous signs and wonders. This is, this is a much deeper, much longer-term process where these gifts are given to us on the earth in order to help build up the Savior's kingdom in power – and to bless the lives of others.

I think what's important is in verse 10, to kind of follow up on that: "And again, verily I say unto you, I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the church. For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God." I think just kind of breaking that down a little bit, it's important to understand that God loves all of his children. He is anxious for every one of them to return to him. And I think he's – what he's saying here, I've given every single one of my children spiritual – a spiritual gift or spiritual gifts to help them come unto the Savior, to help them express faith and testimony and to help his other children in their own spiritual development, in their own spiritual quest for eternal life.

So, what I'm trying to say is, I think we can safely say that it's given to everyone. Everyone has spiritual gifts. We can't say that a person in Dallas, Texas, who loves the Savior and believes in the Bible and has faith in God is not entitled to some of the outpourings of the Spirit – of spiritual quality, and it's not necessarily, but what I'm saying, is not necessarily limited to the Church itself, but to those who are seeking the Savior and his gospel and his understanding and testimony.

I love that because everybody – everybody you interact with on this planet in the flesh, every one of those individuals has kept their first estate. They've done things in their pre-mortal existence, and we don't know how long we lived up there, eons, who knows how long? And it's as if you could say that spirit that lived in the presence of our heavenly parents long before we were born here, who knows what kinds of opportunities for learning and growth we had in that realm, that perhaps as you've said, Alex, maybe it's not just gifts of the Spirit being a gift that the Holy Ghost gives to you and a gift that he gives to Taylor and a gift he gives to me and to everybody else, perhaps one of the ways we could look at this is, heavenly parents have given our spirits that now reside in tabernacles of clay and flesh, that perhaps some of those gifts come with us as a gift of that spirit realm.

I think kind of a special endowment or a special manifestation of the – of God's gift to us or an individual and to bless their lives again but at the same time for them to bless the lives of others in that – as we're all seeking for righteousness.

As you say that, it brings an image to mind. It's – this is not – perhaps this is not terribly unlike power of the priesthood where if you're giving – if you're given priesthood power, when's the last time you were walking down the hallway in your church and you saw a perhaps a high priest or an elder looking kind of sick and he leaned against the wall and he said, I'm not feeling very well and just a minute, and he pulls out his consecrated oil and then dumps it on his head and then seals the anointing, okay, now, I'm going to go about my day. When's the last time you saw that?

Brothers and sisters, any priesthood power given to me wasn't intended for me to consume it for myself. It's intended to get me to turn outward, to bless, to lift, to build, to edify the whole kingdom of God, and in the process, what happens as we use that priesthood power to bless others? I'm being a conduit for heaven's power, for heaven's goodness and light and faith to be established and grow. Well, it has an effect on me, too. Hands aren't laid on my head, but I'm being blessed when I do that. Same thing with these gifts. If you have any one of these or any combination of these gifts, as you use them to turn outward and to lift and build people around you, yeah, they are going to be benefitted, but in the process, God is going to be changing you and me as that power flows through you.

Now the gift benefits both the giver and the receiver. It's interesting to note, there's a couple of things that we were talking about beforehand that we'd like to share with the audience, but if you look again at verse 8, God gives these gifts so that we aren't deceived. He gives these gifts to – everybody has gifts, possibly multiple gifts so that you can know what the truth is, you can be guided in the truth and not be deceived.

There's a lot of deception in the world, and what I love about D&C 46 is that it gives us a guide to not be deceived, but you told us earlier about that sometimes we misunderstand why God gave us gifts and how many gifts we might actually have.

Now I think there's certainly a satanic counterfeit in those gifts, and during this period of time in early Church history and in America, there were a lot of people doing a lot of strange kinds of things that were, you know, certainly not of God, but that the Lord would clarify – try to make very clear here, Taylor, that there are satanic deceptions, counterfeits, but there are also the true manifestations of the Spirit, and we'll talk about this more – I'm sure you'll talk about this more with section 50, but he doesn't want deception and needs to guard against that in the Church because of some of these traditions and behaviors and activities of people who are supposedly Christians who are manifesting behaviors that are kind of a little bit strange and not out of – certainly out of the ordinary.

Well, Alex, what would you say to somebody who says, I don't know if I have a spiritual gift? I know that God says here that he's given gifts to everybody, but he may have missed me, and I don't know how to find those gifts.

I think it's important, I think you said it quite well actually, for all not have every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God – we'd say women, children, young people, we all have them, but how do we discover what they are? I think one way is through our own experiences in the Church. As we grow in the gospel, we sit there and understand things more completely, and I think one way that I think we all know, many, many times in our patriarchal blessings, those spiritual gifts are either mentioned or elucidated to, and I think there's a purpose in that identification because the Lord wants us to grow in that gift, to share that gift, to expand that gift and to bless the lives of others. So I think there's probably, you know, most Church members can identify some of those spiritual gifts by the revelation God gives to them through their patriarchal blessing of that specific gifts. And that doesn't mean if you don't have one, you can't develop, in fact, he says to seek ye earnestly the best gifts, and the intent for which they're given.

What I love about this is God's invitation, as you're talking about, to seek after the best gifts so we can look to our patriarchal blessings, and that's a good starting point and then talk to God and say, Lord, here's my righteous desires, will you magnify those righteous desires for me to serve and lift? And so we invite you wherever you're at, look for the gift or gifts that God has given you and then ask yourself, what's one thing I could do today or this week to share that gift with others to magnify God's kingdom and bring beauty to other people's lives?

So now let's dive into the actual list that the Savior gives to us in this section, starting in verse 13: "To some it is given," notice the qualifier, "by the Holy Ghost," so in this case we know for sure this is a gift that the Holy Ghost is delivering to us, he's granting it, bestowing it upon us, "it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world." This is – this is your very first gift mentioned of all of them, to know that Jesus is the Christ, that he was crucified for the sins of the world. That starts us off.

I want to – I want to address this from the perspective of a fast and testimony meeting in the Church. So just picture sitting in a pew on Sunday, listening to a group of saints get up and bear their testimony. Picture in your mind's eye a little seven-year-old girl standing up, and she has to climb up on a little box there and pull the microphone down, and in this cute, sweet little voice says, I know that Jesus is the Christ, I know the Church is true, I know families are forever, and that God loves me, and she finishes in the name of Jesus Christ and sits down. And right after that, an 89-year-old woman in your congregation feebly gets up and with a walker walks down to the front and then with some help climbs up on the podium and comes over and leans on that podium and in a very shaky voice says, brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I know that Jesus is the Christ, that this Church is true, that families are forever, and that God loves me, and he loves you. And then she finishes in the name of Jesus Christ, amen, and goes down. Did you

notice that the seven-year-old and 89-year-old said the exact same words, but there is something powerful that goes on here, so I wanted to point this out.

One of my favorite quotes from Oliver Wendell Holmes, Junior., years and years ago, he said, “I would not give a fig for simplicity on this side of complexity. But he said I would give my life for simplicity on the far side of complexity.” Now what do I mean by that? I mean that we can – we can make some pretty simple statements, and they're pretty simple. It's simple simplicity. Or, through the course of a lifetime filled with opposition and struggle and temptation and setback and disease and loss, we can, we can work our way through the complexities of mortality until we get to that far side where we can say pretty simple things yet again, but oh, oh, the power that comes with that kind of simplicity.

We live in a world today that is – is struggling religiously, doctrinally, scripturally, of working through this middle complexity to get to the simplicity over there. We get part way through and it gets muddy, it gets messy, it gets – it's a struggle and people give up. Now, the reason I wanted to point this out is because of this one. It is given to some – not to all – to know that Jesus is the Christ, that he was crucified for the sins of the world, and as you work through life and the more experience you have, the very same phrase back here can now be used over here, and it carries with it intense power and depth and meaning.

Here's the problem. There are some in the audience who maybe don't have that spiritual gift. They don't know for themselves, or, they're working through the process or they're listening to the little seven-year-old saying, she doesn't really know. She's saying that because she's been trained to say that but she doesn't really know and I don't really know, and there can be this question of, why can't I be as certain as that 89-year-old woman? Why can't I be as certain as all these other people who are bearing strong testimony? Look at verse 14.

This really ties in, I see where you're going with this, Tyler. “To others it is given to believe on their words, that they may also, they might have eternal life if they continue faithful.” That has great application to what you're saying here. There's those who know, and then those who have testimony, can believe in the testimony of others.

We live in a world that really looks down on this. They think, if you don't know it, if you're not absolutely, one hundred percent certain, then you can't trust it. And I think the Lord is saying to certain people, it's actually a gift. It's a gift. It's okay to believe, to be able to believe, and you don't have to know with one hundred percent certainty. It's okay to be able to get up and say, brothers and sisters, I believe that Jesus is the Christ, that he was crucified for the sins of the world. I believe what other people have shared, what they know for – with a hundred percent certainty. I believe them. That's a gift to be able to do that.

It's interesting, neither one of these two verses are in Moroni or in 1 Corinthians. So obviously the Lord's trying to bring out a deeper dimension to these spiritual gifts that he's elucidated here.

I love this conversation because many of us aspire to know Christ, and I know in my own life I've sometimes felt discouraged that I didn't have like the perfect witness. Well, if I don't have the perfect witness, can I be a perfect follower of Jesus, and I've kind of just over-sold myself. Like, God asks us to begin here with belief, and I take comfort in the fact that even somebody as illustrious as the Prophet David O. McKay went through a similar experience that most of us go through, of believing and working our way up to knowledge, and that is all part of the process of that gift.

Let me share this. David O. McKay, as you know, was the ninth president of the Church. He was a young man and he was herding cattle and he was out there alone and he wanted to know Jesus, and he thought, other prophets have prayed in earnestness and received these grand manifestations. I'll do the same. So he says he knelt and prayed fervently and sincerely with as much faith as a young boy could muster. At the conclusion of the prayer, he got up onto his horse again and he said, no spiritual manifestation has come to me. He confessed, if I am true to myself, I must say, I am just the same old boy that I was before I prayed.

So years went on, and he was a missionary and he actually had some remarkable spiritual experiences that confirmed to him that Jesus is the Christ, and later in his life, here's what President David O. McKay said about the development of his testimony, the development of the gift of believing and then eventually coming to know. "Coming to know Jesus came as a natural consequence to the performance of duty." Wherever you're at in your life, just keep pressing forward. If you cast your mind back to 1 Nephi chapter 8 and hold to the rod of iron, when you first start that path, you believe you're going to get to the tree – you're not at the tree. It's the same thing. We believe that we will get to the tree of Jesus Christ, and as you perform your duty and hold on tightly to that rod of iron, you will have the gift of the fruit of the tree of life, which is to know Jesus Christ.

Now, that reminds me of the experience of Elder Holland. At one time he was talking with a young man, and the young man said, I believe but I just don't know. He said I just wanted to give that young man a big bear hug and say, that's all, that's all you need right now. Don't worry about it, just keep believing and you'll be okay. So belief is enough. Certainly you want to strive for more, but belief is the main element here.

Now, we shift into verse 15 and 16 which kind of go – they seem to kind of go together – 15 he says: "Again, to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know the differences of administration, as it will be pleasing unto the same Lord, according as the Lord will," and then in 16 he says, "Again, it is given by the Holy Ghost to some to know the diversities of operations, whether they be of God, that the manifestations of the Spirit may be given to every man to profit withal." What would you say to those two verses?

I think you made a good point. I think these kind of tie together. I think what the Lord's trying to tell the saints and us today in verse 15 is that there are different ways the spiritual gifts will be manifest, and it's not necessarily wrong to have diversity in that manifestation. The only thing I

can think of right off the top of my head is, a person, for example, who may have a desire to bear testimony in Ghana may do it in a very different way than someone in, you know, Provo, Utah. We have different ways to manifest those spiritual gifts within us, and that's nothing wrong with that, and you'll be able to tell that it's okay. That's their, the way they can express themselves or that's the way they manifest their spiritual gift and it's okay. It may be different than the way you would, but it's all right. It's acceptable to God.

I think in verse 16, this one is where the Lord warns us just a little bit that you need to know that there are those deceptions, there are counterfeits, and if you have this gift, you'll be able to determine and understand which ones are of God and which ones are counterfeits.

Then he shifts into another couplet that kind of goes together, 17 and 18, at least in my mind: "Again, verily I say unto you, to some is given, by the Spirit of God, the word of wisdom. And to another is given the word of knowledge, that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge." What's the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

So I think the key word in these two passages is the word of wisdom, meaning word that you're able to convey wisdom to another individual or to someone, and I like to think of these people as the type of people who may have this gift are those who are able to counsel with people, they're able to give them direction, they're able to listen and say, you know, here's maybe what you should do. Here's maybe – here's my thought on things that would guide a person in their own spiritual development or in their own lives and, but they have to be able to convey – they could have all the wisdom in the world, but they have the power through the word to convey that wisdom to others.

Beautiful. You know it reminds me of the ancient wisdom literature. It's all rooted in helping you make a wise choice, not a foolish choice. It's rooted in Deuteronomy chapter 11 verse 26 and 27. It's so simple. It's one of those when people hear it and they're, like, well obviously, duh, but it's really profound. Verse 26: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. A blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day," and then verse 28: "and a curse if you will not obey the commandments." So everything you're describing here to me is the embodiment of this ancient wisdom tradition brought into the Latter-day context to say, there are a million voices out there, a million paths you can follow, but there's only one that's going to lead you aright and it's keep the commandments of God. Put your feet on the covenant path, take hold of the iron rod, and move forward. It's a word of wisdom.

The interesting corollary to that is verse 18: "To another is given the word of knowledge." There are a lot of things that are true that may not always be directly related to covenant path progression or discipleship, but it's important. God – all things are spiritual unto him. There are scientific and social sciences and political and all these other fields of study that to some is given the gift of knowledge that may not be directly related to a covenant path analogy, but it's a gift of God, it's a gift of the Spirit, and I think we're seeing that in our world today as God pours out

knowledge, not just upon the heads of the saints, but upon the heads of all of his children who are seeking to make life better for the world.

I also like this phrase, word of knowledge, because it implies that again, they're able to convey that knowledge to others. I like to use verse 18 as kind of the one who I think many, many teachers are blessed with. They have knowledge, but there's a lot of people who have knowledge, but they can't convey it very well because they don't have maybe a gift to convey the word, and so I'd like to think that perhaps the Lord's saying, there's people who gain knowledge and who can convey that knowledge through the power of teaching or the word or written or spoken however, to others to benefit their lives and in the end same time bless them. Love it.

Now, the next one you'll notice seems to come in another couplet, another pair, verse 19 and 20: "And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed; and to others it is given to have faith to heal." I love what you said earlier, Alex, that if you – if you don't recognize a particular gift having been given to you in the past, it doesn't mean that you're now hopeless in that area. We seek earnestly. If somebody is struggling, we fast, we pray, we plead, we seek to live our life in such a way to be able to be granted, for instance, a gift to be able to heal other people, or, I need a gift to be healed, and this is a very real manifestation of the Spirit in the Old and the New Testament as well as in the Book of Mormon, and now he's bringing it into our dispensation saying, that wasn't just reserved for the ancient days.

I think it's important to note too, that in the early period of the Church they had very little medical knowledge that we have today. People are constantly sick. You read journals; they are just plagued with sickness and disease. They didn't have the health practices and understanding we have today, and so for these saints at this time to say there are those of you who can exercise faith to be healed and there are those of you who can exercise the faith to heal. This had to be very comforting to them, not that it isn't as comforting to us today - it is. Medical knowledge has kind of taken a real, you know, jump ahead kind of thing with a lot of Latter-day Saints, I'll be okay, I just need to go to the doctor, but at the same time we know we can exercise faith beyond that of medical knowledge, and others can exercise their faith to actually give the healing blessing. Beautiful.

It's important that he mentions in verse 21: "And again, to some is given the working of miracles." I think it's in Moroni he says working mighty miracles (Moroni 10:12). We have minor miracles, but we have major miracles. I think there is a difference, and we sometimes don't necessarily see the minor miracles, and yet they are probably very evident in our lives today, but there's also the working of mighty miracles in things that you just can't explain away. I think that's a marvelous gift, and I think it's a marvelous gift to be able to recognize the fact that God is working miracles in your lives. I oftentimes say to my students, are you exercising enough faith that miracles happen? And can you identify those miracles in your lives? And again, that's one of the gifts I really want to seek, is to see the hand of God in my life, and as I try to exercise my

faith in my own spiritual gifts in the lives of other. Has the day of miracles ceased? The answer here would be no.

Now verse 22 and 23: "And to others it is given to prophesy; and to others the discerning of spirits." So this ability to look down the road and see events or to prophesy things to come and then in the present, discerning of spirit, the right and the wrong. What would you – what would you say about if somebody were to say, what is – I've heard this phrase before, but what is it? What does it mean to be able to discern the spirits?

You look in the dictionary – I didn't look in the 1828 Webster's dictionary, but I know discernment means basically the ability to judge. Can you judge things correctly? Can you see people's motives? Can you see intent? Can you see this is a good thing, this is a bad thing? I think the spirit of discernment is very broad, just the power and ability to judge everyday human events or people or situations, a wonderful thing to be able to be blessed with the power and gift of discernment lest we be deceived, right?

And then the final two, verse 24 and 25 go clearly together: "Again, it is given to some to speak with tongues; and to another is given the interpretation of tongues." And this is – this is one of those gifts that in the 1 Corinthians time period in the letter that Paul wrote to them, that particular gift was a big deal back then.

So today I think the gift of tongues is most manifest in our missionary efforts to take the gospel to all the nations of the earth, and I think Joseph clearly recognized this is probably the most important manifestation of that gift. He said one time, be not so curious about tongues, do not speak in tongues except there be an interpreter present. So he is saying there is that manifestation, and in the early Church, particularly through the 19th century, that sort of gift of tongues was exercised on quite a number of occasions. But this is what he says, he goes on to say this: "the ultimate design of tongues is to speak to foreigners, and if a person – if persons are very anxious to display their intelligence, let them speak to such in their own tongues. The gifts of God are all useful in their place, but when they are applied to that which God does not intend, they prove an injury, a snare, a curse instead of a blessing." I think he's saying really, in our day, the best manifestation of the gift of tongues are those who can preach the gospel in their own – in not their own native language, but have the way and power to convey it to others in their language.

And for those people who are hearing the gospel, to have the interpretation of tongues when somebody doesn't have the words, the vocabulary, the training to be able to communicate.

I'm reminded of a member of my ward who mentioned he went to Germany on his mission and he had a very difficult time learning German, and on one occasion while he was very, very still new in the mission field, his missionary companion asked him to bear his testimony, and he said, it just came. It came out and it came fluently and he expressed himself just in a marvelous way, and his companion just kind of looked at him, you've got to be kidding me! And he said,

afterwards I didn't even really know what I had said. And he said, I think from that – I think I remember correctly, he said from that time on I was able to comprehend the language and express it in a powerful way.

After discussing all these spiritual gifts, I think the Lord summarizes the significance of all of these gifts and why they are given, verse 26: "And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God." And we're all children of God, and what a wonderful blessing, I mean it just shows you the love God has for his children. I want you to have spiritual experiences, I want you to enjoy the blessings of knowing who my Son is and striving to keep his commandments, and if you'll do that, you'll enjoy some of these wonderful, marvelous spiritual gifts.

So who does he – who does he give an extra portion of these gifts to in this revelation? Verse 27. And I would say that any man who has been a bishop in this Church can say, verse 27, I've had that gift given to me during that time, and it simply says: "And unto the bishop of the church," and, of course we would say bishops of the Church and other Church leaders who have the responsibility of an ecclesiastical assignment over a ward or stake or whatever, and I would say to include in that, in that second phrase, "and unto the bishop of the church," notice – "and unto such as God shall appoint and ordain to watch over the church and to be elders unto the church," so it starts with the bishops, but like you said, this isn't exclusive to them.

Mission presidents, Elders Quorum presidents, and Relief Society presidents, Young Women presidents, Primary president. Yeah, to them, of course, they are "to have it given unto them to discern all those gifts lest there shall be any among you prophesying – or professing and yet not be of God." So in your Young Women's classes, I think you can say the Young Women leaders are entitled to understand what spiritual gifts are being manifested and who has spiritual gifts that you can tap into to bless the lives of other people. Beautiful.

Let me expand on that by introducing a concept taught by Elder Marvin J. Ashton back in the 1980s. He gave this incredible talk on the gifts of the Spirit, and in that talk he referenced what he called, or what he referred to as the less conspicuous gifts, which would imply that in the scriptures in those three major chapters we get the conspicuous, the big, obvious gifts of the Spirit, and then he says, let us review some of these less conspicuous gifts. Now listen to this list and see if it helps you understand this whole concept of a wide array of gifts that your Savior can give to you through the Holy Ghost: "the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; a gift of being able to weep; a gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost."³

³ Ashton, Marvin J. "There Are Many Gifts." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 2021, www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1987/10/there-are-many-gifts?lang=eng.

I hope what that does for you is opens your mind and heart upward to be able to recognize and not just in yourself, but in loved ones around you, and in people all around you the goodness of God, the gifts of God, the attributes of God, and let me just say it this way. If you think of your heroes, the people that you most admire or that you most want to emulate in life, if you stop for a moment and analyze why is it that I look up to that person? Why is it that they're so desirable for me to try to be more like them? What is it? I'll bet if you peel back all the layers, it's simply that you're recognizing gifts of God, attributes of Christ that that person has either been given or developed or worked on or a combination of all that through their life to the point where you're recognizing the goodness of God in that person, the attributes of God in that person, and you want to be more like God, more like the Savior Jesus Christ, as it's manifested through the gifts that that person has displayed or have embodied moving forward.

So all of these gifts we've talked about today, they're not random themes that are out there, they're actually attributes that are perfected in God. They are attributes of Christ. This whole idea is an invitation for us to come unto Christ, to become more like him. Every one of these gifts, whether you take the conspicuous or the less conspicuous gifts, they're all invitations to become more like the Savior.

I like the word emulate. Yes. I have a – again, a neighbor who emulates Christ every single Sunday. She takes a meal over to our neighbors across the street who are not Latter-day Saints, who are in their – she's 90, her husband's a few years younger – and because of their situation and condition, she takes them dinner. I notice that. She emulates Christ and what a gift of compassion, of love, of neighborly concern. A gift of the Spirit? Absolutely. Absolutely. It's what the Savior would do in that setting, emulating the Savior.

I recognize that it says, verse 11, "For all have not every gift given unto them," certainly you don't get everything and we at least have one, but I think the president of the Church is entitled to all of the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit, and again, that's so huge, based upon our discussion, I think it's very large, but it's interesting in verse 29 it says: "That unto some it may be given to have all those gifts; that there may be a head, in order that every member may be profited thereby." And then I look in D&C section 107 verse 90 – let's start in verse 91: "And again, the duty of the President of the office of the High Priesthood" -- president of the Church -- "is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses. Behold, here is wisdom; yea, to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet, having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church." I've always thought about putting together, at least for the life of Joseph Smith, an article or something on his manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit. I think he prophesied; he healed, he's done it all, and probably more.

But I think you look at our present prophet, look at all the prophets, they have that entitlement, if you will, to manifest those gifts unto the Church so that there may be a head. And what a blessing it is. It adds more power. When we say we thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days, to know that he has given some special powers and abilities and gifts to those

who lead us at those levels, it makes it – it makes it easier for us to move forward with faith in Christ.

Now to finish off our discussion of the gifts of the Spirit, I thought it might be interesting to tie us back into how Paul concluded his discussion of the gifts of the Spirit back in 1 Corinthians 12. After discussing that list of those specific gifts, he then talks about the Church as a body, and he talks about the eye of the body, the ear, the hand, the foot, and how a body is most successful, is most healthy and most capable, when all of the members of the body are working and doing their job as they were appointed. I think that's an interesting connection that Paul helps us make between our membership as a community of believers in the Church and the gifts of the Spirit that are given, that we shouldn't look around in comparison and say, well, I don't have the gifts that she has and I don't have the gifts that those brethren over there have and this group over here and that family's got all these other gifts and I don't have it. Comparison in that context is the same thing as Paul uses of the eye saying to the rest of the members of the body, I'm better than you, or maybe the hand saying, well I'm not as good as the foot, because he has more power to govern where we go.

It's this idea of don't compare. Be grateful for who you are in the family, in the Church, and be the best version of you that you can possibly be, and that's good enough. God will carry forth his kingdom, this body of Christ will move forward more beautifully if you - if you accentuate the wonderful gifts and work on seeking whatever gifts the Holy Ghost inspires you to seek and you move forward in faith.

That's a great – great analogy. I think what's interesting is just think, in your own ward, how many spiritual gifts are exercised or given to a community of a ward, a ward community of four hundred members. Think of the stake. Think of the entire Church and how all of those collectively can bless the lives of other people in and outside the Church. What a difference the world is because of the collective gifts of the Latter-day Saints. Powerful!

And isn't it amazing that the Lord Jesus Christ chooses to build up his kingdom and to do his work and to perform his miracles and the marvelous work and the wonder through imperfect instruments and tools like you and me and all of us together, that he gives us just enough, just what we need to be able to build up that part of the kingdom, and we just keep moving forward in faith, trusting him. I love – I love the fact that he's giving us opportunities to learn and grow through these – through these manifestations of the Spirit in our life.

Now, we've got section 47 and 48. Section 47 in quick summary is John Whitmer who – he goes way back, that Whitmer family, they are with us from the beginning, and Joseph comes to him because Oliver, who used to be the historian, is - he's kind of a long ways away – important mission in Missouri so Joseph comes to his friend, John Whitmer, and says, I want you to be the Church historian now, and what was John's response?

Well, maybe I could just give a little background. So here John Whitmer is one of the Whitmer clan. There's the Christian, Peter, John, and David, and of course their father Peter Whitmer saying you, Mary – we could talk about their wives, we can even have Hiram Page married to Catherine Whitmer – so this family is very well closely connected to the early beginnings of the Church, Joseph finishes the translation of the Book of Mormon at their home.

I think Joseph clearly saw the contributions John Whitmer could make while living with the Whitmer family, and almost immediately he begins to use John Whitmer as a scribe or a clerk or a recorder. As you mentioned, Tyler, in 1830, October 1830, Oliver Cowdery goes with the missionaries to the Lamanites and makes the connections in Ohio and of course moves on to Missouri, and John Whitmer was used to write many of the revelations and record for Joseph Smith, and so in March he comes to John and says, you know, I really need a little more help here. I like you as a recorder, but I need you as a historian. And he's very ambivalent about – he can do the recording, he doesn't mind transcribing, but writing history is another thing.

And he basically says, I don't think I'll do it, but if you can get a revelation on it, maybe that would help give me the confidence I need, and sure enough, Joseph did. And there it is. Verse 1, section 47: "It is expedient in me that my servant John should write and keep a regular history," and there – that's the new calling – "and assist you, my servant Joseph, in transcribing all things which shall be given unto you, until he is called to further duties. And again, verily I say unto you that he can lift up his voice," he can preach, continue to preach, but the reason for this calling, verse 3: "And again, I say unto you that it shall be appointed unto him to keep the church record and history continually; for Oliver Cowdery I have appointed to another office." Okay, so Oliver is further away, but Oliver's going to get a new calling, he's going to get more; he gets released from this one and sustained to a new calling, which happens all the time. Sure.

So the interesting thing here, I like the words, the phrase a regular history, and John – John did keep a history. Now, he doesn't start it until a little bit later, a few months later, he backs up and talks about the mission to the Lamanites, but he actually got a book, a bound book to write this history in, and at the very top it says History of John Whitmer Kept by Command. I think he may have meant commandment, but he begins keeping this record, but he did only so sporadically, and by 1838, he had only written eighty-five pages. I have to give him credit for that; there is some wonderful, powerful, important material there but then he's excommunicated on March 10th; Joseph asks for the book back, for the book, we need your history. He didn't give it to him. Obviously, he's a little bit put off. Yeah. What's interesting is the Church will move on to Nauvoo, and after the martyrdom he added some more – three more chapters, 20 through 22, another nine, oh, excuse me, another eleven pages, and so that volume was only 96 pages, and so is it complete? Well, not really. Is it important? Absolutely.

That book – he retained that book in his possession until 1878. That's when he dies. His wife Sarah gives that to David Whitmer down in Richmond, Missouri, and David Whitmer keeps it until 1888, and he dies, then he gives it to his son, David J. Whitmer, and David J. Whitmer

ended up passing, he passed away in 1895, and then he gave it to George Sweich, who was David Whitmer's grandson. And in 1902 George Sweich sold it to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, now the Community of Christ, so we don't have that record in our collection, but the good thing is, that record has since been – transcripts of that have been published in various forms but that's part of the Joseph Smith Papers in their assigned histories volume. So we have access to it, we've had access to it, but now we have it in our own printed edition of the Joseph Smith Papers.⁴ So he didn't quite keep a continual history, but we have to thank him for what he did.

That's beautiful. So as we close this section, for me, one of the important takeaway lessons that applies to us in the 21st century is that when we're moving the kingdom of God forward, there's a big difference between a leader of the Church coming as a friend to somebody saying, hey, I got this calling I want you to fill, or this duty I need you to fulfill for me – something very different about that versus prayerfully counseling as a presidency or whoever has that right and authority to receive revelation for that level of the Church organization, to know through the power of the Holy Ghost what the Savior wants done, and then to come in the name of the Lord and extend that calling in behalf of the Lord, and then hopefully good things happen, hopefully fulfill that calling, magnify that calling.

Now, the final section, just a few moments on section 48. What would be the critical parts of section 48 for people to understand?

So, this is, this is kind of historical. There is some good counsel and advice for all of us in this and I think we can pick that out quite easily, but the point is, we're planning on having the New York saints know that the Church, the entire Church, has been asked and commanded by God in section 37, 38 to move to the Ohio. Well, they're going to have to sell their property, this is saints in Colesville and Fayette, Palmyra and Manchester, but they are anticipating they will come, Joseph's then in anticipation they will come during the next couple of months, which they do.

And by the first of June 1831, these groups have come. There's about two hundred members, and these members are all of a sudden inundating Kirtland and surrounding areas, and so there's the big question mark, what do we do when they come? And so the Lord indicates to them it would be great if you Ohio saints could welcome them and maybe you if have land or you have room in your homes, bring them – help us out, help them out. But at the same time, where is the goal? Joseph knows from section 28 that the location of Zion is on the borders by the Lamanites; that's in western Missouri. So the anticipation is, once these New York saints arrive, there will be – they're going to hold a conference which is held June 3 through 6, and then they're going to go down to Missouri, a small group are going, actually over two dozen elders are going to go down to Missouri, and while there, the Lord would locate – indicate to Joseph Smith where the location of Zion is.

⁴ Press, The Church Historian's. *The Joseph Smith Papers: A Comprehensive Digital Collection of the Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2021, www.josephsmithpapers.org/.

So he's saying in the meantime, let's help them if we can. If we don't, don't worry about it. But the eastern branches could also use their own money to buy their property. But I love the verse 4, this is practical for all of us, Tyler.

This is as applicable today as it ever was in 1831, and it's just good, common sense: "It must needs be necessary that ye save all the money that ye can, and that ye obtain all that ye can in righteousness." Now of course the purpose of that is so that they can purchase an inheritance in Zion in Missouri, but the application should be very evident to all of us. We need to have reserves there. But just to let you know the Church did garner funds and monies, and through the agents, basically the Church agent, which was Algernon Sidney Gilbert and Bishop Edward Partridge during the next almost three years, 1831 to 1833, the Church did buy land in Jackson County from funds generated by the saints and consecration, and they were able to purchase almost 2100 acres of property at over five thousand dollars, so that was considerable amounts of money, but what I try to emphasize to my students is that Edward Partridge, Joseph Smith, Algernon Sidney Gilbert tried to fulfill the revelation as the Lord commanded in section 48.

That's beautiful. So as we conclude this particular study of sections 46, 47, 48, we want to finish with reassurance that there is a God in heaven. He does know what he's doing, and he could have – he could have made this unfolding Restoration so much easier, so much simpler, and with so many more heavenly manifestations, but he chose to do it with people in their – with their gifts as well as their struggles and the opposition, and I love just watching this Church as it keeps coming west and keeps growing and it keeps solving all these problems. I love looking for the hand of God guiding them, shaping them, forgiving them, empowering them. And, brothers and sisters, it's no different today than it was back then, because this is just still – I mean we're two hundred and some odd years old, but it's still just the beginning of what God is going to do on the earth with his kingdom, and we get to be a part of it and that's a privilege. Know that he lives, and know that he loves you. And we leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Amen.

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