

Come Follow Me Class Insights – 41 – Doctrine and Covenants 111-114

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 111 through 114.

Now we're covering from August of 1836 through April of 1838 and these years there is a lot happening behind the scenes that – that doesn't ever even end up in the Doctrine and Covenants in our sections. But to set the stage, the Church is in serious debt; they've – they've got major, major financial problems at this point having dedicated the Kirtland Temple, having the saints in Missouri driven out and losing a lot of property that they're still trying to figure out what to do with that, and now having the saints being removed from Clay County, Missouri as well, they're just in a lot of financial difficulty right now.

And in July of 1836, a man by the name of William Burgess comes into Kirtland to speak with Joseph and some of the leadership and he tells them hey, I know of a house in Salem, Massachusetts where in the cel – in the basement is buried a treasure, or there's gold and silver there. And so Joseph and Hyrum and Oliver and Sidney in early August, they leave Kirtland and they go east. They – they visit New York City, they go up to Boston and then they end up in Salem where they meet up with this William Burgess and they – they walk different places, William thinks he remembers where the house is with the buried treasure, they spend about four days there. The record is - is not complete but obviously, they're looking for this treasure and they can't find it and at that point, Joseph turns to the Lord to ask what they should do and we receive section 111.

Look at how the Lord opens up this section, and by the way, has there ever been a time in your life when in a desperate situation when you're in what we might call fight or flight mode you make a very, very rash or quick reaction to something only to later on realize oh, that probably wasn't the best thing to do or probably not the wisest thing to say when I was in that – that fight or flight – that - that anxious mode of oh no, what am I going to do? I'm in trouble and I need – I need something to fix my problem, well look at how the Lord begins this revelation. Verse 1, "I, the Lord your God, am not displeased with your coming this journey, notwithstanding your follies." In other words, had Joseph asked the Lord before going, the Lord could have given him some specific

directions and maybe, just maybe, the Lord might have sent him on this journey anyway, but it would have been for a different purpose.

Now before we proceed in Salem, Massachusetts with this – this group of four men who went back to find this treasure, let's just bring this story home to us today and say, hmm, what could I do to avoid folly, to avoid doing things that would maybe not work out the way I thought they would – they should work out? Some of you have heard of the acronym HALT, that you don't make major life decisions in a period of HALT which is when you're overly hungry, when you're angry, when you're overly lonely, or when you're extremely tired. HALT – H-A-L-T. Why? Because sometimes it becomes this – this reaction, or – and there are a million other words you could add in here – when you're – when you're in an emotional state that isn't calm, where you're – you can't think clearly. Fight or flight mode is great for saving your life in an emergency but not great for making life decisions that – that could affect your entire future. And so when you're in a relationship, when you're struggling in a crisis of faith, but when you're trying to make major life decisions regarding education or career, it's probably best to not make decisions when you're in a trough of life, when you're in a valley of the shadow of death. It's probably best to hold on at that point and try to endure until you can see more clearly, where you can think more clearly, then make those decisions that have these lasting effects, knowing there are going to be times when we're feeling all of these – these other emotions, but at that point, we hold on to the iron rod when we're in the mists of darkness, we're not making major decisions, major life decisions, we're going directions that will have effect on us.

Now, back to Salem. When they realize that well, this trip isn't going to give us any major treasure of gold and silver, look at what the Lord tells them. Look at verse 2. "I have much treasure in this city for you, for the benefit of Zion, and many people in this city, whom I will gather out in due time for the benefit of Zion, through your instrumentality." You'll notice God didn't say thank for you coming looking for buried treasure but instead, you four, I'm going to give you all these people to join the Church. Nobody joins the Church in August of 1836 when Joseph is there, that I know of. But later on, in 1841, William Law and Hyrum Smith give a mission call with a copy of section 111 to Benjamin Winchester and Erastus Snow and say, would you go and fulfill the prophecies in section 111. So they go. Benjamin Winchester doesn't last very long. He forsakes the mission very shortly after they've arrived and leaves, but Erastus

Snow stays there in Salem, and he carries this revelation on a piece of paper in his pocket and he reads it frequently, and it is very hard for him at first. He has – he's facing a lot of opposition and it's that revelation that keeps him there, and can you imagine for Erastus Snow what the words in verse 2 would mean? Or look at verse 4, "it shall come to pass in due time that I will give this city into your hands."

You see sometimes you and I, we get promises or we get impressions and inspiration from the Lord and we think, oh, okay, well the Lord's going to help me fix all of my problems right now, and then when those problems don't get fixed right now, we can get frustrated and give up trying to seek to receive those – those promises and have them be fulfilled.

I love the story of Erastus Snow here where he perseveres, he endures some struggles and some setbacks and some opposition because he knows that in due time, good things are going to happen in this city and it's interesting that it was actually accelerated by some people who were fighting against him and his message who challenged him to a public debate and they show up in this public forum and have this public debate and Erastus Snow does so well that many people are convinced and now he starts teaching a whole bunch of people. By the time he's finished, he's going to have baptized over a hundred people in Salem, Massachusetts – one guy, and it's because section 111 was given.

Now, it's fascinating to me to consider this in its historical setting that if you're Joseph Smith or Hyrum Smith or Oliver or Sidney, the four brethren who went to Salem looking for treasure, you could feel really silly, you could feel ashamed of your folly, but isn't it fascinating how God has the capacity as an infinite and an all-powerful, almighty being, to take our perceived folly, our perceived struggles and – and mess ups even at times and if we keep working with him and trusting him, he can turn those struggles into miraculous successes in ways that we never would have foreseen. Section 111 to me is a reminder that in spite of my weakness, in spite of my – my reactionary fight or flight reflexes that are quite silly at times, it's okay. God is still able to do his work and still able to perform miracles in due time.

Now for some of you, that phrase, in due time, equates to a couple of weeks for resolution to come or maybe a couple of days. For others, it's a couple of years. For others it's maybe a couple of decades. And for some of you, it's not

until the next life, but in due time, if we trust God and we keep turning heavenward, in due time, his miracles, his purposes will be fulfilled and our folly won't – won't get in the way of God doing his work.

Look at verse 5, "Concern not yourself – or yourselves – about your debts, for I will give you power to pay them." You'll notice he didn't give a time stamp. He didn't say I'll give you power next month. He just says I'll give you power, which means you have to continue to trust. Look at verse 6, "Concern not yourselves about Zion, for I will deal mercifully with her." As you consider your own life, remember the invitation from President Nelson: Let God prevail. It's another way of saying concern not yourselves, don't worry so much, let God prevail. He'll provide for you if you trust in him what you need, and it doesn't mean that you're going to be rich and prosperous in the world's perspective. It just means God will be in charge of your life as you move forward doing the best you can, trusting in him, and good things will happen and you don't need to be overly anxious or overly concerned about all the things that the world wants us to be overly concerned about.

Let's finish section 111 with verse 10 and 11, "For there are more treasures than one for you in this city. Therefore, be ye as wise as serpents and yet without sin; and I will order all things for your good, as fast as ye are able to receive them. Amen." Notice that phrase there at the very end, as fast as ye are able to receive them. It would be like the analogy of having a tree, this little fruit tree that you've planted, and it's just – it's growing nicely but you want more. You want more fruit, you want more blessings, more promises, and so there's this other very large, well established tree of the same species over here and you're – you're saying well I want – I want what they have, so it would be as if God's saying I can't cut a branch from that tree and graft it into your tree. It doesn't work. You're not able to bear it yet, for whatever reason, and those reasons are varied.

The point being, that if you consider this, by their fruits ye shall know them, right? You've heard Jesus use that phrase. We want to grow more fruit. Well how do you do that? By their roots ye shall grow them. If you want more fruits, brothers and sisters, look to the root of your – into the soil of your conversion, into your faith in Christ, into your discipleship, into your – your covenant loyalty to him, not to the things of the world, not in comparison, but look to the root where that soil of discipleship can – can go deeper and you can tap into

more power from heaven and you're going to find that more fruits are borne. Once again, let me say that again, by their fruits ye shall know them, and by their roots ye shall grow them. So especially those of you as parents or as leaders in the Church or as teachers, rather than spending the time showing your children and others the fruits of your own discipleship, anything we can do to help strengthen their roots and help them build a relationship with – with God and to trust him more fully, that's where their own future roots will potentially produce the fruits of true discipleship, making it so that God can now graft into their life bigger and more fruitful boughs, bigger branches to bring forth even more fruit down the road.

So section 111 is a beautiful – beautiful reminder to all of us to look for treasure of all the writings that God has in store for us and don't beat yourself up if you – if you seemingly mess up on occasion, if you – if you make a misstep or a faulty reaction in a circumstance. Just keep moving forward in faith rather than looking backward in embarrassment and you're more likely to be able to put those roots deeper.

Now, some amazing things happened in the Church between August 6 of 1836 and July of 1837. You'll notice we covered almost an entire year, just shy of a year between those two sections and there is a lot that happened in that time frame.

As we get to this interesting time where the Church – God has asked many things of the saints. He's asked them to go settle Zion, Missouri, to purchase properties, to build a temple in Kirtland and, of course, people are trying to manage their lives and farms and relationships. So here we are, 1837, the Church is just over seven years old. Kirtland itself has seen massive growth from about 1000 inhabitants to in 1836 about 3000 people living there, and what happened, actually throughout the United States, there's been quite a bit of inflation, a lot of growth. Estimates are that land prices had gone up somewhere like seven times in Kirtland, so if something costs \$7 an acre, but now land was over \$40, \$45 an acre and during 1837 those high prices dramatically dropped down to \$17 an acre and we'll see when this all plays out, that where everything becomes very expensive, suddenly people lost a lot of wealth and there's all these debts that the Church is trying to work with in trying to establish Zion and have the center of the Church also in Kirtland and there is the work of God that needs to be done and it simply cannot just be

done by people feeling the Spirit. That's crucial, but God also has material resources at hand to help the work progress, and we see that Joseph Smith, in addition to being a prophet, in some ways he feels this need to kind of be the chief executive officer and the treasurer and the banker and he's using all the best resources in his mind and in society with all the people who can help support him in the cause of Zion and sometimes mistakes were made.

And we'll just point out that when we look at what is called the Kirtland Safety Society, so essentially Church leaders decided to create a bank and with that bank they printed paper money that people then could share with one another and it turns out that banks offer credit – the word credit means trust – the idea is if I hand you this piece of paper and I say this is worth \$100, there is supposed to be a level of trust that it really is worth that much. Well it turns out that there were thousands of banks throughout the United States at this time, often privately created by citizens or communities and I don't think the saints understood what was going on economically throughout the United States but there was a massive economic crash in 1837 that contributed to some very serious and significant problems in the Church.

So one of the issues here at play is with this major financial difficulty going on, they're thinking part of the problem is, is we owe money to so many of the people. What if we stopped paying our interest to other people? What if we had our own bank? The problem is, when they went to the legislature of Ohio, of the State of the Ohio at that point to petition to start a bank, the – the Ohio legislators weren't approving any new banks and so they shut down the petition. So they came back to Kirtland and said, well, we don't need their permission, we'll just start a non bank that functions as this private equity group that will act as if we were a bank, but we're not going to be a bank. That's going to end up getting Joseph and Sidney into some legal problems later on. They weren't lawyers, they – they didn't know everything they were doing. They were trying to solve these major problems so January 2nd 1837 is when they started this Kirtland Safety Society, but as Taylor mentioned, it's – it's only a few months later when it's not just in Kirtland and it's not just in Ohio where financial troubles start peaking, it's in all of the United States at the time.

It's actually one of the worst financial disasters in American history. There are many causes. One of them is Andrew Jackson was very much against the

idea that the U. S. government runs a bank that supports other banks. And so he shut down essentially the federal bank and so it made it so that other banks that were depending on the support of the U. S. bank, started to fail. And according to some research, the number of banks that failed in 1837 was a higher percentage than the number of banks that failed in the United States during the Great Depression – something in the order of either around 47 percent of the banks failed in the United States in 1837, failed or were partially closed compared to about 35 to 37 percent during the Great Depression and the Great Depression, we all know about but in some ways this was more of a disaster. So historically, in the context, what the Church leaders were trying to do is how do we temporally provide salvation for the Church, but they can't control the larger economy.

And the amazing thing is, is it was a very easy thing for the enemies of the Church to – to help accelerate the demise of the Kirtland Safety Society, because they start printing all kinds of allegations about – about the Church and their lack of resources, and it causes a run on the bank. That's what causes failures for banks is when people come and demand their money be given to them that was invested in the bank and eventually, the bank runs out of the capital and the bank fails, and that's what happens in Kirtland and many people blamed Joseph for all of this, one hundred percent blame on Joseph.

It's interesting that many, many banks failed, and if you look at the legal record, other banks that were in very similar situations as the Kirtland Safety Society were not legally attacked, and yet Joseph was and the Kirtland Safety Society. So we're not trying to say that what the Kirtland Safety Society did was a hundred percent correct or wise in every way, but it is interesting that the Church had enemies and people pounced on what they saw as a weakness even though they weren't willing to use that same standard against banks in their own communities.

Yeah, this is - this is a very difficult time. Now keep in mind, that bank opened in January and it's not even going to last through the year. In February, a month later, the – the number of people who are really, really struggling with Joseph Smith, his leadership and feeling like he's a fallen prophet, that number is growing and unfortunately, it's growing among some of the upper leadership of the Church and you have a group in February of 1837 who go to the Kirtland Temple and they have this big meeting where they are prepared

and ready to declare Joseph as a fallen prophet and sustain David Whitmer as the new leader of the Church.

Well, unfortunately, for that group, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball got wind of that meeting, of all the people who felt like Joseph was a fallen prophet and they had assembled in the temple. So Brigham and Heber C. Kimball are there as well and they listen to all of the arguments; they listen to all the statements at which point Brigham Young comes to the front of the room to address the crowd, and here's what he says. Joseph was a prophet and I knew it, and that they might rail and slander him as much as they pleased, they could not destroy the appointment of the prophet of God, they could only destroy their own authority. And then this line: cut the thread that binds you to the prophet and to God and sink yourselves to hell. That's what he tells them. They didn't end up putting David Whitmer in charge that night, and it's – this is just a very, very tumultuous and very difficult time.

Now did you catch this, it was just last week in the episode where we were talking about the dedication of the Kirtland Temple and the outpouring of this Pentecostal experience with angels and the Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning and the keys being restored and this mountain peak of revelation, and now here we are a few, just a few short months when – when the struggles really start ramping up and now it's feeling almost like everything's coming apart at the seams, not just in Kirtland, but over in Missouri. Keep in mind they've been kicked out of Jackson County into Clay County, now they're being kicked out of Clay County and they're moving farther north into Davies and Ray and Caldwell Counties going further north until they're going to end up in Far West. This is a very, very difficult time.

Now, Joseph Smith is in the Kirtland Temple on June 4th of that year 1837 when he comes up to Heber C. Kimball who's a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and he whispers in Heber's ear that the Spirit has whispered to him, send my servant Heber over to England to begin the work of – of spreading the gospel in England. Heber's not feeling qualified for this. He's not – he's doesn't feel educated, he doesn't feel smart enough, capable enough and so he says I want Brigham Young to go with me, but Joseph needed Brigham to stay in Kirtland. Brigham got the title of the Lion of the Lord for a reason. For a good reason. He's – he's not going to be – he's not going to surrender easily to anyone and Joseph needs him in Kirtland and so instead

we send a couple of other – or a few other brethren with Heber C. Kimball on that mission.

Now, that was early June. There's a little problem. Thomas B. Marsh is the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and he feels like Joseph has now overstepped his bounds.

Now let's remember, how old was the Church? It's about seven years old and none of them had grown up in the Church; there wasn't a Handbook of General Instructions. Yes, we have these ongoing revelations but it wasn't clear the role and interaction between the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve and Thomas B. Marsh felt like it's my job to give instructions to the Apostles and to send them off on missions and it's not Joseph's job to come take members of my Quorum and send them on missions without talking to me. Even Parley P. Pratt was planning a mission. And so if you've ever been in any kind of relationship or organization where somebody makes a decision different than what you were hoping to make or different than what you thought you had the authority to do, you can understand that when the stakes get a little higher, the conflict seems to be a bit more intense and so there's a need to resolve this.

In fact when he comes back into Kirtland and sees all of the fighting among his quorum, the Quorum of the Twelve and many of them, the Johnson brothers and others have – have become very vocal against Joseph, he's trying to unify them but he's also got this struggle with Joseph. He actually goes to the home of Heber C. Kimball, knocks on the door and talks to Heber's wife, Vilate Kimball, and he tells her, your husband is going to find no success on his mission because I didn't send him over there, and I'm the one who has the keys to send the Quorum of the Twelve. That – that's not – that's not a great way to console a woman when her husband's been sent overseas for who knows how long - for who knows how long on this mission. So then he comes – as he's in Kirtland, he comes to Joseph with this, with this wrestle and struggle. One of the ironies here is this revelation is given on July 23rd, 1837, which happens to be the exact same day where over in England, they're giving their very first public speech, their very first public sermon, and here he sits with Joseph saying I've got some problems with this, and Joseph receives a revelation, section 112 and it's Thomas B. Marsh, President - President of

the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time who is the scribe for his very own revelation. So he's the one writing this down.

Notice how the Lord begins it, "Verily thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Thomas: I have heard thy prayers; and thine alms have come up as a memorial before me, in behalf of those, thy brethren, who were chosen to bear testimony of my name and to send it abroad among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, and ordained through the instrumentality of my servants."

Don't you love this? I just love how God understands the foibles and follies of his children and even though Joseph and Thomas Marsh had had an intense conflict about this, suddenly there's this beautiful revelation and God's like Thomas, I know you, I know your deep, righteous desires to do good in building the kingdom and I've invited you to participate in my work; this is not your work Thomas, it's mine and I will actually honor your righteous desires. I love (overtalk) it's beautiful – God works with us.

It's beautiful that it's I who have called them on this mission. It wasn't you and it wasn't Joseph. It's me. They're proclaiming my name. It's – missionaries in our Church today go out and whose name do they have on their plaques? It's not the name of Thomas Marsh – Thomas Marsh or the President of the Church or the President of the Quorum of the Twelve, it's the name of Jesus Christ. He's the one who ultimately calls them and remember President Monson's famous statement, whom the Lord calls the Lord qualifies. So even though Heber and his companions didn't feel like they were fully qualified, in fact, I don't know very many missionaries who show up at the MTC saying I am so prepared, I am going to be one of the finest missionaries in the history of the Church, bring it on. I just don't think that happens. And the few that do, quickly learn that this is the Lord's work and it's he that empowers them and it's not their talent that leads to their success.

Absolutely. Now look at some of the correction that's given here, verse 2, "Verily I say unto you, there have been some few things in thine heart and with thee with which I, the Lord, was not well pleased." Nevertheless, in spite of these struggles that you have Thomas, "Nevertheless, " let's put greater emphasis on what's going to follow, always or nevertheless emphasis here, inasmuch as thou shalt or "hast abased thyself thou shalt be exalted; therefore, all thy sins are forgiven thee."

That is so powerful, and I love this word here in verse 2, the last line, "I, the Lord, was not well pleased." The Lord's not saying I am not currently well pleased. We see other parts of the Doctrine and Covenants where God isn't currently well pleased with somebody. But it's interesting God is speaking in the past tense. In the past Thomas, I was not well pleased with you. But as you've humbled yourself, you are forgiven. God is so magnanimous, so enormous in his grace and grace - graciousness to us and if we review the Doctrine and Covenants, how often do we hear the Lord saying fear not, or I have forgiven your sins. It's almost like he just wants (unclear) to realize don't get hung up in your past mistakes. Press forward. I will absolve you of your sins as you acknowledge them. It's so deeply empowering. (overtalk) I want you to spend all this time paying attention to that one mistake you made in the past and do nothing except look at that past mistake. God's like you made a mistake, I noticed it, it's time to move on.

We must move on. So look at verse 4, "Let thy heart be of good cheer before my face." You don't need to come cowering before me Thomas, be of good cheer before my face, "and thou shalt bear record of my name." Thomas, this isn't about you. This is about my redemptive power and using my name and taking my name to the whole world, "not only unto the Gentiles, but also unto the Jews."

Now look at verse 5, "Contend thou, therefore, morning by morning; and day after day let thy warning voice go forth; and when the night cometh, let not the inhabitants of the earth slumber, because of thy speech." Professors love this one. Oh yes, this is what we do. Our theme song is O Babylon, O Babylon – 'cause that's just what we do. Our second favorite song is Carry On, 'cause we do that a lot too. As the kids fall asleep we say, my job is to keep preaching while you're trying to slumber. Yes.

Now look at verse 10. We have a hymn in our hymnbook that comes from verse 10, "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand and give thee answer to thy prayers." That verse is just as applicable to Tyler Griffin and Taylor Halverson as it ever was to Thomas B. Marsh or to you equally so. "Be thou humble and the Lord thy God shall lead thee." There's something very, very powerful about that.

Let's just write this out. Really briefly, the Latin word for humility is humilis which actually means dust. And there's somebody that we're all related to

named Adam, and Adam's name in Hebrew actually comes from the Hebrew word related to earth or dust or dirt and so what God is reminding us is that we are no greater than the dust of the earth. He wants to make us greater but we have to remember that it's he who exalts us and we do that by remembering our origins. In fact it's interesting that as children of Adam, that God is not trying to say mean things about us, but we were built from the dust or the dirt of the earth and if we somehow think we're better than everybody else, the dust I wear, the dust I eat, the dust I drive, whatever it might be, it makes me better than anybody else, we fail to realize that all of that is built from the same creation that is owned by God and what he's asking us is to remember we are his creation, not our own creation. He's asking Thomas B. Marsh and by extension all of us, if we're humble, if we remember our origins, that we are his creation, he will exalt us to be like him, but if we think we can exalt ourselves and build our own kingdom or as the Tower of Babel was built, to think that we can use our own dirt to build our way into heaven, it doesn't happen. The only way is through humility.

It's beautiful. In fact, he says that very thing in verse 15, "Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph; for verily I say unto you, I am with him, and my hand shall be over him; and the keys which I have given unto him, and also to youward, shall not be taken from him till I come." It's that – that clay in the hands of the potter. I'm – I'm working with Joseph just like I'm working with you. Don't – don't rebel against him and don't exalt yourself, don't think you're better than – than you really are, and don't think you're not clay. (Overtalk) You think you're not clay then yeah, you're not going to allow yourself to be shaped the way that he wants to shape us.

Now if you go back a couple of verses here speaking of the Quorum of the Twelve, look at verse 13 what he says, "And after their temptations and much tribulation." 1836 – 1837, 1838, wow! This is a refining fire for these people. There is much temptation, much tribulation. Notice what he says, "behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts," pretty hard not to – to work with clay that is dry and hard. You can't shape it. It's easy to get broken, but if you harden not your hearts and stiffen not your necks against me, they shall be converted and I will heal them. I hear the voice of the merciful and grace-filled God speaking to us saying you don't need to keep being so over-anxious about all these things about these boundary lines or about the debts, just be humble, trust me, move forward, I'm going to provide,

I'm going to shape you in the process and I will heal you. I'll make you the shape you need to be to be able to be the instrument in my hands that I need you to be to perform my work. It's beautiful.

Look at verse 23. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face." What percentage is that? Well I don't think I'm included in that. Okay, so 99 percent. All flesh has become corrupt before my face. He's saying you're all struggling which is so ironic because in 1837 there's this whole group that has become pretty numerous and pretty vocal pointing fingers of accusation against Joseph Smith and the fact is, is what is God saying through Joseph, through that very person who's being accused of – of being so wrong or doing things the wrong way whether it's the Kirtland Safety Society or revelations that aren't working out or the Church is struggling in Missouri and he's not giving revelation to – to get them out of the struggles, what does he say? "All flesh has become corrupt before my face."

We've talked about this word in the past; it's an important one - corrupt. It comes from the word rupture and this is an intensifier so everybody's intensively broken. All of us are broken and what did we hear just a few moments ago? I will heal you. Brokenness invites healing and God is saying you're all broken, that is part of the plan, you were sent to this fallen world, you are children of Adam built from the dust which is corruptible or breakable, and it's my job to heal you so be with me. Help one another. Don't point the fingers of scorn or accusation, seek to uplift and support and all of us can use this, in our families and in our communities, in our societies, and actually for ourselves. I think many of us struggle with being broken and then calling out our own brokenness, not being humble in our brokenness but calling us out as if we are somehow permanently broken to a point that we cannot be redeemed by God and he's saying I understand you guys are all broken, I can heal.

So then verse 24 he continues this idea, "Behold vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord." So he's – he's making these, kind of these dire prophecies of because all flesh has become corrupt, here's what I'm going to do to soften up that clay so to speak. Look at

verse 25, "And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord." In other words, just because you are a member of the Church doesn't mean that you can't be corrupt and that you don't need purging and you don't - that you're not broken and need fixing. It's going to begin in my house and then it's going to go forth.

And the house could mean even a temple or the body of the people, meaning the population that's in his home as if he's the father of the home. He's a householder. Look at verse 26, "First among those among you saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me." Interesting. This is – this is an allusion back to an Isaiah phrase where people profess to know his name and they – they say that they're called after his name, but they don't know him. Isaiah 6. Yep, and they blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.

So verse 27, "Therefore see to it that ye trouble not yourselves concerning the affairs of my church in this place...but purify your hearts before me; and then go ye into all the world and preach my gospel." Back to the fruits and roots, don't be so concerned about – about all the other trees and branches and what they may or may not be good at, including your own. Send the roots deeper into the soil of – of the scriptures, in to the doctrines and the salvational principles that you can learn from prophets and you can then become more purified, more capable as an instrument in the hands of the Lord, you have a bigger structure for him to give you more responsibilities to produce more fruit to help more people find that straight and narrow way that leads to eternal life.

I love verse 30 that provides us clarification where before this time it wasn't totally clear who had different roles and responsibilities in terms of who's in charge, First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, how does it interact with one another? We are told that they are equal in power and authority and yet here God says so that is true, yet the Quorum of the Twelve also takes direction from the First Presidency. Read what it says, "For unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders." It's almost like an aside. I think that the point of verse 30 is not to actually declare that even though this is an important point, but to say the power of this priesthood is given for the last days and for the last time. And Jesus is trying to remind them they have his power to do his work, but the

point we all should recognize is a First Presidency serve as counselors and leaders to the Quorum of the Twelve and we see that still playing out today.

Yeah, and if you take verse 33 because most of us reading this aren't in the Quorum of the Twelve or the First Presidency so we're saying okay, how does this apply? Look at verse 33, "Verily I say unto you, behold how great is your calling." Whatever your calling is, in whatever part of the vineyard you've been planted in and asked to grow fruit, how great is your calling. "Cleanse your hearts and your garments, lest the blood of this generation be required at your hands. Be faithful until I come, for I come quickly; and my reward is with me to recompense every man according to his work – as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega. Amen."

So this is really interesting what we have here in verses 33 and 34, this word - calling. The word Church literally means those who are called out, so yes, this is directly for Thomas B. Marsh, he's the President of the Quorum of the Twelve but all of us are called to the work of God, all of us. If you have joined with God in his Church, you have heeded the call. You have a calling.

I also wanted to just mention this phrase here, "lest the blood of this generation be required at your hands." It's a kind of a strange phrase; we don't use that much today but throughout scriptures blood often was a symbol of responsibility, meaning, if you didn't teach the truth to somebody and they sinned, the responsibility of that sin would be on you. We see this in Jacob, the brother of Nephi who says I needed to teach my people the truth so that their sins, their blood, the blood of their sins would not be on my garments. So just to kind of clarify that so we don't get a little bit weirded out by the use of blood here, it's just a symbol of responsibility for – for sin.

Well, Thomas B. Marsh, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, he's going to take this to heart and he does a lot to try to unify and bring the Quorum of the Twelve back into some semblance of – of unity and oneness, not completely, we end up moving west and we're going to end up in Missouri in Far West with Thomas B. Marsh and many of you have heard the story of – of Thomas' wife Elizabeth with their neighbors George and Lucinda Harris, both having a cow and they're milking their cow but not having enough milk to – to make cheese so they agree that they're going to alternate days of the milkings giving all of the milk plus the cream strippings to the neighbor this day and then tomorrow they're going to give all of their milk to me so you can have enough to make

some cheese with. Well it's not very long before Lucinda Harris says, um, Elizabeth, you're holding back the cream – a pint of cream from each milking, the best part for making the cheese. You're not giving me as much as I'm giving you on the day, I'm not holding anything back and she denied it.

So the teachers come, what would be maybe considered home teachers in the olden days or ministering brothers today, and they – they assess the situation and say sister Harris is right, you need to be – and she flatly denies it. So here's Thomas B. Marsh as the President of the Quorum of the Twelve and he doesn't appreciate this judgment against his wife. So he – he takes the matter up with the bishop who also says, um, Sister Harris is in the right here, not your wife. So he takes it to the high council in Far West and guess who they rule in favor of? Lucinda Harris. At which point the First Presidency hears the case because after all, he's the President of the Quorum of the Twelve and he wants – he wants more – more – a higher authority to judge this. And the judgment comes in favor of Lucinda Harris.

George A. Smith is the one who wrote a lot about this experience later on although you can find elements of this story in a variety of historical settings and journals and in other people's interactions, including Thomas Marsh's own words, speaking of making it right with George Harris later on. So George A. Smith recalled that Thomas said, quote, he would sustain the character of his wife even if he had to go to hell for it. And Heber C. Kimball told him, well, that's where you're going then. It was – it was pretty heated. Thomas prayed and asked what the Lord wanted him to do and he receives a three to five page revelation where God told him what to do and that he was to sustain brother Joseph but no, he took a different course and then on October 24th 1838, okay this is a year after he's received section 112, we're in Far West, October 24th, he goes and he signs an affidavit saying that Joseph is doing bad things and is going to lead the saints against the – the militias in Missouri. He signs this affidavit on – on the 24th and it's on October 27th when Governor Boggs gets that affidavit and signs the exterminating order where all members of the Church are to be driven from the State or exterminated if they won't. Thomas B. Marsh is – is one of those who - who signs this - the affidavit that's going to lead to this extermination order. He didn't follow the counsel in section 112.

Now to finish his story, he's excommunicated, obviously, in 1854 his wife Elizabeth dies. He then comes west and in 1856, two years after his wife's death, he comes into Salt Lake City and he begs to be rebaptized and he addresses the saints. Brigham Young lets him speak in a conference where he addresses the saints and he tells them, if you think you can prosper and survive by leaving the Church and fighting against it, he said prepare your back for an awful whipping and he basically shared with them, I don't want any position, I don't want any authority, I just want to be counted among you because I have, I have been through the whipping of – from the Lord is how he describes it.

That is a really sobering story that Thomas B. Marsh had been declared – had been given these amazing, beautiful insights, revelation, and God had invited him to be humble and for a season he was, and yet he turned away and eventually found his way back. What's the takeaway for all of us? If we choose to be faithful to God, God will be utterly faithful to us; he will give us everything that he has promised and we may not want to be too harsh on Thomas B. Marsh because all of us at times have found ourselves on the wrong side of a question, although what he did was pretty egregious and in terms of getting people kicked out of Missouri and the destruction that happened to the members. But the invitation for all of us is hold fast, stay with God and be humble, even when you feel that you have been unjustly treated. God knows you, he knows where you're at and he knows what your needs are.

Wonderful. Okay, now let's jump into section 113. You'll notice the date here, March of 1838. We don't have a lot of historical setting for why was Joseph asking these questions or was it somebody else asking Joseph to find out the answer to these questions from Isaiah chapter 11. You'll notice that Isaiah chapter 11, back to our tree analogy, is this section where God has cut down the house of Israel, the tree, so you have this, this tree that's been cut down and Israel feels like it's been totally forsaken, cut off and in section 11 or in Isaiah chapter 11 it talks about a stem growing out of the root of Jesse, so this new growth coming where everything seemed to be desolate, and if you think about how the children of Israel were carried captive in the northern kingdom in 721 BC by the Assyrians, and then the southern kingdom of Judah carried away captive by Babylon in 587 – 586 BC, it can feel like this scenario and he's saying wait, there's - there's hope, there's new growth that's going to bring forth more fruit than you ever thought imagined.

And so the question here in section 113 is what do these things mean? "Who is the stem of Jesse spoken of in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th verses of the 11th chapter of Isaiah?" And the answer is, "Verily thus saith the Lord: It is Christ." Stem of Jesse. Who's Jesse? Jesse is the father of King David. He is the most celebrated of all the kings of Israel. David, in fact, is the single most frequently mentioned name in our Bible. The name David appears more than any other proper name. They love David, the Jewish people do.

And Moses is like a – right up there with him, so like these two characters. They looked to David as the royal, ruling monarch, the Davidic throne is a big deal, and they look to Moses as the law giver and Father Abraham as kind of the patriarch. So those are the characters. So Jesse, the stem of Jesse, it's going to be somebody who is of the – the descendancy or of the lineage of Jesse through David, through King David. Well, that's Jesus the Christ as the stem and then verse 3, "What is the rod spoken of in the first verse of the 11th chapter?" The answer, verse 4, "Behold, thus saith the Lord: It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim, or of the house of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power." So there's a rod that comes off of the stem coming out. Who is that? Well, it's going to be kind of a mixed lineage individual who's going to do amazing things. Then he goes on to verse 5, "what is the root of Jesse spoken of?" Verse 6, "Behold thus saith the Lord, it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days."

I love how Joseph is going to the Lord with questions from the scriptures and the Lord is helping Joseph liken the scriptures to himself. That's the beauty of scriptures, that's what makes them living water is their applicability over time and over space. Doesn't matter who you are, doesn't matter where you live, doesn't matter what your condition is, what your gender is, what your age is, or what your socioeconomic status is, you can find likening principles from every page of scripture to make them become your story and – and it's alive, and you can apply it. You can find yourself in there, and I love how in this section 113 God is helping Joseph actually see himself in this with this whole root of Jesse analogy seems to be coming out as God's going to do his work. Now this is just the beginning phase because what we end up with is a tree that is so big and is so fruitful, but we're just looking at those beginning phases here in Isaiah chapter 11.

Now if you combine this with what Jesus teaches his eleven Apostles after they arise from the Last Supper in John chapter 14, he says arise, let us go hence and in 15 they're probably walking through some vineyards and Jesus teaches them I am the true vine and you're the branches, and if you don't abide in me, then you have no life; you'll be purged, pruned, cut and set aside and burned because there's no fruit there. I love this analogy because the minute I start to become prideful, I lose humility and I start to think, I'm alright, I'm pretty good, I got this. I got this figured out. It's as if I'm saying to God I don't need you today, I got this, I know what I'm doing with this and I then cut myself off from this – this vine, Jesus Christ, this stem and I'm saying I got it. Well, I no longer have access to all of that – that power and that energy and that capacity that flows into me from Jesus. Without him, I'm nothing more than a fruitless branch lying on the side of the vineyard waiting to be burned. But with him, I can grow. With him if I abide in him, then I can endure even long periods of drought or major storm or terrible diseases that come along. As long as I abide in him, he will make me fruitful according to the way he needs me to be fruitful.

Now, unfortunately for us sometimes using this analogy with like a grapevine as an example, everybody who's ever planted grapes or fruit trees knows that to make them more fruitful, you have to prune them. You have to cut them. You have to shape them, and I don't know any human being who loves this pruning process, the shaping process, it's not – if you're finding yourself going through a major trial in your life whether you've lost a loved one or a relationship, whether you've lost a job, whether you've lost your health, whether you've lost money, whether you've lost a home, doesn't matter whether something has gotten lost or not, the point is, that is an opportunity to let God prevail yet again in my life and in your life. And it's to look heavenward and say I was putting so much effort into that and now it's gone, what would thou have me do with what I have left and he will help you become more fruitful and produce more fruit on – on what he has shaped you to become. It's a beautiful principle that's not always painless but it's beautiful if we let God prevail and we let him be the root of our life and we tap into that power.

So cutting always hurts, and just briefly, we have a word in our language called - decision. It actually is related to the word incision where you cut into something. And a decision literally is to cut something off, just think in your

life, any time you've made a decision, sometimes it's difficult and hard, it's hard to cut things out of our lives and sometimes God decides for us, he closes pathways that we thought we should pursue, he cuts off that opportunity and it hurts, that's why decisions can be hard in our lives, because it hurts to cut things off and if you want to tie this into like tree metaphors, you've heard of deciduous trees, the scientific word for deciduous trees are trees that in the Autumn or the Fall decide to cut off their leaves. They cut out things that will not allow them to survive during a harsh winter and if deciduous trees did not cut off their leaves, it would be very difficult for them to survive. So this all ties in. If you want to be fruitful, we have to cut things and we either do it on our own (unclear) decisions or sometimes God decides for us and cuts things off.

Now he shifts gears in verse 7 to some questions know come from Elias Higbee and he asks from Isaiah chapter 52, what does this first verse mean which says, "Put on thy strength, O Zion – and what people had Isaiah reference to?" And notice how God likens this Isaiah passage to us for our day. It doesn't mean that Peter couldn't take those same verses and apply it to the saints in his day. It doesn't mean that Isaiah couldn't liken it to the people clear back in 720 BC. It means that scriptures that are from God are living, they're applicable, and now Joseph is writing for us. I love this. Verse 8, "He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion," this "Put on thy strength, O Zion." What about this next part, verse 9, "loosing herself from the bands of her neck," Zion? He says, "We are to understand that the scattered remnants are exhorted to return to the Lord from whence they have fallen; which if they do, the promise of the Lord is that he will speak to them, or give them revelation."

There are so many people in Church history and there are so many people today who could benefit from reading Isaiah chapter 52. This idea of it's time to – to put on strength, other places in Isaiah, arise from the dust, cast off those – those dirty clothes and put on your beautiful garments, be arrayed for the coming of the Lord. Take the chains, cast them off and move forward trusting in God that he's going to make you fruitful. It's – these analogies are so beautiful when you consider them in a global context or a worldwide context or a church wide context or a ward or a stake or a family context, but for me, the most beautiful application comes in that home with – with that

family and then one-on-one, in the mirror with individuals to say I don't need to stay bound down by the dirty clothes of my past struggles and past periods where maybe I was not who I needed to be, but I can put on beautiful garments and God will forgive me and I can progress. I can move forward. There is always hope in Christ. There's not hope separate. If I cut myself off from the vine I have no hope, I have to wait for the gardener to come and graft me back in and hopefully nourish me to the point where I can really regrow that strength. I am not my own Savior. I desperately need the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be fruitful, in order to produce anything worth having.

God does not want us to be stuck in the habit of being comfortable or at least used to the bands around our neck or our body that keep us bound down, and God is saying trust me, be with me, you've had these bands on you, that is not permanent, the barrier's been removed. I am here, I can save you, and so we do not need to be bound to learned helplessness. We look to God, we remember that we are part of the vine, we are not cut off and if we choose to believe him, he will save us. It's that simple and that powerful.

Let's talk about one of my favorite characters in Church history that often gets overlooked. His name is David W. Patten. He is the second in seniority in the Quorum, in the original Quorum of the Twelve and he's – he had some struggles along with everybody else in those difficult years, 1836, '37, '38, he comes to Joseph in April of 1838 seeking a revelation and the Lord says to him, "It is wisdom in my servant David W. Patten, that he settle up all his business as soon as he possibly can, and make a disposition of his merchandise, that he may perform a mission unto me next spring, in company with others, even twelve including himself, to testify of my name and bear glad tidings unto all the world." So notice this, you have this mission call that's going to begin on April 26th, 1839 from Far West and the revelation here in section 114 is given on April 17th, 1838, so he has over one year, just slightly over a year to prepare for this mission and he owns a mercantile, a store with a lot of merchandise and he's told make a disposition of his merchandise as soon as he possibly can. Most of us hearing that would say well if the mission isn't until next spring, then I should probably wait until you know, January or February of next year to start making that disposition. This revelation tells him to settle up all of his business as soon as he possibly can.

Now the interesting part of this story is that David W. Patten is going to be involved in a – a struggle with the Missouri militia in October of 1838 which is just six months later. Remember that Thomas B. Marsh signed that affidavit on October 24th, well the day after, October 25th is when a group of Missouri militiamen came in and has taken hostage a few of the members of the Church in the Far West area, and so David W. Patten says he will lead a group to go down to the Crooked River to try to liberate these men who have been taken hostage.

So they leave in the middle of the night, this group, and David W. Patten is leading them, and they're coming down over the hill into the – the river bottom there of the Crooked River, and the eastern sky is starting to just light - lighten up enough with the coming dawn that it leaves all of these men silhouetted against that sky and so the militiamen seeing this huge group coming, they're running away, but as they're running, they have a very clear view of where to aim and one of them shoots his musket and hits David W. Patten in the stomach. The bullet goes into him and he's struggling; he's wrestling for- for his life. They take him and carry him to a home nearby and he lays there and he tells them to not weep for him, but that he's happy, and so David W. Patten dies in the evening there of October 25th. David W. Patten ends up being our first Apostle martyred.

Now, here's the rest of the story moving forward. There are people who take section 114 and it's only two verses long and say, uuh – Joseph's a fallen prophet. He is no longer a prophet; he's lost his gift to prophesy. Why would they say that? Because their argument – some of them is – if he were truly a prophet, he would have known that David W. Patten was going to be killed on October 25th 1838 and he would never be able to fulfill his mission with the Quorum of the Twelve, it's going to begin next Spring, and yet that's what this whole revelation is about.

Now keep in mind that sometimes you and I have these mortal blinders on and we don't see all of the story and I don't know if this is all of the story but listen to this description a year and-a-half later. On March of – or March 12th, 1840, Ann Booth, a Manchester saint - so that's Manchester England, - she saw a recently martyred American Apostle preaching to spirits in prison, those in the spirit world who had not heard the gospel in mortality, and was beginning to baptize them. John Wesley, the 18th century British reformer and

founder of Methodism was among those spirits and after the apostle baptized him, Wesley proceeded to baptize others. Do any of you find it interesting that the doctrine of baptism for the dead hasn't been introduced yet? But this Manchester England saint named Ann Booth has had this vision of the martyred American Apostle in company with others going and teaching and baptizing spirits. Fascinating. Her – her vision anticipates this – this coming forth of this - this ordinance that could be performed. Now here's the significant part. Wilford Woodruff was so impressed when he heard Ann Booth share her vision that he wrote a full report of it in his journal. Brigham Young wrote about her vision home to his wife and they all rejoiced that section 114 seems to have been fulfilled in ways that none of them had anticipated before, that David W. Patten did seem to fulfill a mission for the Lord in company with others and that he went to declare that their captives could be set free and that there was a way for them to be baptized.

I don't know about you, but for me, section 114 with additional information that we learn after the fact, helps me not be so frustrated when promises aren't fulfilled the way I think they should be fulfilled or prophecies don't come to pass the way I think they should be coming to pass, that perhaps the Lord is inspiring his prophet to say exactly what he would say in 114 because God was going to fulfill that promise, just not at all in the way that we thought it was going to be fulfilled.

So as you move forward in life, just know that there is a God in heaven and if we will let him prevail, if we will abide in him, if we will connect with Christ and be humble and turn to him, he will forgive us, he will strengthen us, he will help us become fruitful and he will even overlook our follies and our struggles when we're – when we're not doing the things that we ought to be doing the way we ought to be doing them. Know that he lives and know that he loves you and we leave that with you in the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Amen.