

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz production
Week 1

We are responsible for our own learning
Dec 26- Jan 1,2023

What an incredible year it has been. Hard? For sure... Stressful? At times.... Full of Miracles? Absolutely.

This week marks four years that we have been doing this podcast. It was four years ago that we went from a three hour church to two an hour church and the Come Follow Me curriculum was introduced. 4 years ago I recorded our very first Come Follow me episode. What a journey it has been.

I am extremely excited to study a-new the New Testament. Though we don't have a reading topic for this week, I'd like to share some favorite scriptures with you and some incredible things that I have learned this year.

As you know we asked for you to send in names of single mothers that needed some love and help this Christmas season, and also for donations to help provide them with an overwhelming Christmas and the spirit of Christmas also. I would like to thank all of you who contributed to this life changing project. I can assure you that lives were changed and the spirit of Christ was felt so strongly as we delivered these gifts and food to eight families.

I'd like to share an experience we had during this project that taught me a great lesson. The morning that we went out to shop for the gifts and food my wife went one way with the girls and I went the other way with the boys. Our task was the food, and as usual I was given a very strict shopping list. I'm sure we circled that store at least 10 times looking for all the items on the list that we were required to get. There were 2 things that I took the liberty to throw in because I thought they looked good. We were in the breakfast Isle and I had the thought, "well, they will need a Christmas breakfast" so we put in some pancake mix and syrup. Then in another aisle we walked by the spaghetti and I thought "that would be a great meal for Christmas eve". When I got home with all the food my wife said "what is this? I didn't put pancake mix and spaghetti on the list." I don't remember what I said back to her but I'm sure it was something clever and we just brushed it aside.

One of the first families we visited was a wonderful family in Boise that lost their father suddenly a few months back. With her permission I would like to share a portion of her email that she wrote to us after a day or two later.

"I wanted to thank you for your family's service. After you left and the shock wore off and we processed, [my son] said, "This is from Heavenly Father." And we pulled out the Hungry Jack pancakes and we all said, "no way!! I can't believe it!"

[that] was a message from [my Husband that passed away] maybe he helped orchestrate this whole thing. Actually come to think about it, he loved pumpkin pie and one of the only meals he knew how to cook in college was spaghetti with pasta sauce. He lived off of spaghetti and pancakes. You included all of those. And then the Hungry Jack pancakes. It's almost like he sent Christmas to us.

This was a wonderful family that didn't really need things given to them, but they did need to know that their father that is on the other side of the veil and their Father in Heaven are watching over them and they both love them very much. As I pondered all that happened and all the miracles that took place at the hand of God; I was astonished to think about when I was at the store picking out food, I didn't have this huge powerful moment where the Spirit told me to buy pancake mix and spaghetti, it was just a small nudge, what almost just seemed like a good idea and I thought I was just acting on my own intellect, when in fact it was all part of God's plan.

This taught me a great lesson about being in tune with the spirit. It made me wonder how many other times I heard the spirit and just thought it was a good idea. Most times we really don't get to see the workings that come because we chose to obey.

Don't underestimate the power of prayer and conscious effort. Another experience we had was when we went to deliver more presents and food to families here in Utah. As we started to get loaded up and ready to leave it seemed like everyone was annoyed and irritated. When we all got in the car you could feel the tension. I looked back at my kids in the car and said "the adversary really got us good this time, we are all in a bad mood. But, we are on the Lord's errand now and it is time to dismiss the adversary and invite the spirit of Christ to be with us as we do His work." We said a quick prayer and within minutes of leaving everyone was happy again and laughing and in tune as we discussed the families that we were about to deliver God's gifts to. It truly is powerful to keep His will constantly in our thoughts and quickly change when we recognize a mistake or mis-step, just as fast as we are able to repent He is just as quick to forgive and restore blessings.

The second thing I wanted to discuss was illustrated by a college professor who asked his students "how many legs a dog has if you count the tail as a leg." After some thought the students all agreed the correct answer was five. The dog would have 5 legs if you count the tail as a leg as well. The professor responded: "you are all wrong, the correct answer is four. Just because someone says the tail is a leg it doesn't mean that it is true. A tail can never be a leg".

In the world we all live in today we are faced with many things that people will tell us are true. But just because they say it is true does not make it true. Since the beginning of time there has been enmity or opposition between the Adversary and the Son of God. God and Jesus stand on one side with the absolute truth, and the Adversary or the Deceiver stand on the other side screaming that He has the truth. Only one can be right, and we are all very aware that the truth exists in and through Christ, Jesus alone.

Nephi say this:

"Wherefore, [redemption](#) cometh in and through the [Holy Messiah](#); for he is full of [grace](#) and truth. (2 Nephi 2:6)

His brother Jacob said it this way:

"for the [Spirit](#) speaketh the [truth](#) and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really [are](#), and of things as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13)

And spoken by Christ Himself:

“whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for **good** cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good. For behold, I am the Father, I am the **light**, and the **life**, and the **truth** of the world.” (Ether 4:12)

The truth of the world truly is Jesus Christ. He is the source of all truth.

I remember as a kid we use to play with this dumb toy called a magic 8 ball. It is about the size of a grapefruit and you would shake it and ask a question, then as you looked down at the window this message would appear. I would ask “Does Sally really like me?” and you'd see the message “don't count on it”. This ridiculous device was evidence that humankind will always seek to know what truth is and what our fate will be. That is why this magic 8 ball was named one of the greatest toys of all time.

What's amazing to me though, is that we have access to a source that is never wrong, a source that has all the answers you could ever want. The Original source of ALL truth, the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ. And though it may take a little more effort on our part than shaking a toy, we can be sure the answers we receive will always be the correct one. The all important question arises then, “How does it work? How do I get an answer?”

To understand this we must turn to another great source of truth. The Holy Scriptures. Nephi, son of Lehi after hearing about his father's vision of the tree of life, also wants to see what his father saw. He described to us how he opened the windows of heaven in chapter 11:

“For it came to pass after I had desired to know the things that my father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat **pondering** in mine heart I was **caught away** in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high **mountain**, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot.” (1 Nephi 11:1)

There are really three main things we need to do in order to open the windows of Heaven. First we have to have a desire to know the things of God. Then, we have to have faith that God can and will show us these things, and third we have to ponder them. How long? As long as it takes. This pondering is the most overlooked aspect of revelation. The adversary uses his tools very well to of keeping us too busy to ponder, or feeding us things to distract us from the truly important things that need to occupy our minds.

Nephi from the book of Heleman was another great prophet that had many questions and received many marvelous answers. In his ministry he foretells the future of the chief judge being murdered. Then after being accused of being part of the murderous plot, he foretells again what will happen when they confront the Chief judges's brother and where they will find his blood. These people were all over the place when it came to understanding God's truth. After these miraculous things some thought Nephi was a God, because he told them the thoughts of their hearts. After all this, Nephi is walking towards his home and he tells us the key to how he is experiencing all these wonderful things.

“And it came to pass that Nephi went his way towards his own house, **pondering** upon the things which the Lord had shown unto him.” (Helaman 10:2)

I'm sure after what he had been through there was a lot to think about. I bet right now he is so glad that there were no cell phones back in his day. This next experience probably wouldn't have happened to him if he left the city and his mind got taken by his social media posts, or he had to check his likes on facebook or tweet something about what just happened. If that was the case these next few verse would probably never have existed:

“And it came to pass as he was thus pondering in his heart, behold, a **voice** came unto him saying:

4 Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with **unwearyingness** declared the word, which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine **own life**, but hast sought my **will**, and to keep my commandments.

5 And now, because thou hast done this, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that **all** things shall be **done** unto thee according to thy **word**, for thou shalt **not** ask that which is contrary to my will.

6 Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God.

7 Behold, I give unto you **power**, that whatsoever ye shall **seal** on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

8 If ye shall say unto this temple it shall be rent in twain, it shall be done.

9 And if ye shall say unto this **mountain**, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done. (Helaman 10:3-9)

What a promise... what a blessing. All because of his desire, faith and pondering.

As we begin our study of the New Testament, might we use this opportunity to prioritize God in our life as the most important thing we focus on. Might we find the time to study and ponder on His gospel as we read the account of our Lord and Savior in His earthly ministry.

I pray that we might be blessed with power from on high for our efforts in pondering His words and His works.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.