

LEADING SAINTS

Pure Doctrines Relearned | An Interview with Fiona and Terryl Givens

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Hey a quick note before we jump into this episode here leading saints. We're trying to do more. How i lead interviews now. What's it how. I lead interview. You've probably heard him before. It's where we find everyday leaders around the world who are serving in one capacity or another. Maybe an elder score president cited president ward mission leader. High councilor stake presidency counselor so many different callings of leadership that we have in our faith tradition and we'd like to sit down with them one and just say how is it that you lead. Give us a few principles. Put it into perspective. What's your area like and these turn into phenomenal resources of best practices and it's always fun to hear what the other guy is doing. So if you know somebody who we could interview on how i lead segment regardless of their calling. We would love to connect with them. Go to leading saints dot org slash contact and send us the information. Maybe give them a heads up and we'd love to reach out to them. Connect and see if we can get them on that leading saints podcast for one of our how i lead segments again. Go to leading saints dot org slash contact and send us the information. This is the podcast the leading saints. Podcast my name is kurt. Franken i welcome you back another episode. If you're new to leading saints. I gotta tell you real quick that we're a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping latter day saints be better prepared to lead and we do that through content creation like this podcast. We have articles At leading saints dot. Org we have weekly newsletter. That goes out with unique content. We've got virtual summits that we put on a couple times a year. And it's just a a wealth of knowledge here so jump in and i hope you find a long-term place here now in this episode. I interview fiona and givens. If you're familiar with the givens you are you know this is. This is a power couple in our latter day saint community. I appreciate their thinking their perspective. They are scholars their intellectuals they've written a series of wonderful books together and some books solos well but their newest book called all things new rethinking sin salvation and everything in between is a book that i recently read and had the opportunity. Sit down him and discuss some of these concepts with them as they relate to church leadership and just some really deep thoughtful perspectives about some basic doctrines that we sometimes take for granted or we. We just assume we understand. These things and fiona terro

give a really unique perspective on some of these things end up. Be great conversation one. That hopefully gets you thinking. They always get me thinking. They'll say something. And i'll have to stop think i've never thought about it. That way or wait. What did you say is that how does that fit in everything. So and who was really great discussion. I encourage you to check out their book. And hopefully you enjoy this conversation with fiona and terrel givens. Today i am in midway utah. With terrel and fiona givens. How are you to turn great. Thanks very well thank you. So now you are. You've recently Having a position with the maximal institute of come out to utah here to join with some some other saints as well right to. How's it hasn't been right. Well it's been a pretty good adjustment so far although covert his main rather a natural transition but to we're in richmond for thirty years and had frequent trips to utah. Were not entirely strangers to the area. But it's really good to to be here cool. That's great so have you together now. I think this is a false one. This is our fourth one south. What type of marriage. Counseling follows a book after your marriage counseling during the book that saves the book. Yes eight is. We're not really compatible collaborationist. Would you say we were. I think we end up doing a pretty good job. It's lots of fireworks on the way there. Well right i think writing is one of the hardest things in the world to collaborate on because it is right. You're investing yourself at such reflection of your of your deepest held ideas and convictions and so to be willing to compromise negotiate. Those is a difficult thing. Yes there is compromise negotiating on tarot spot. I feel your pain. Said the new book style. All things new rethinking sin salvation and everything in between what was the The the emphasis of this book or question. Were you hoping to to answer through this. Well we've traveled quite a bit in the united states. And around the world talking to people well being asked by leaders of congregations and stakes to talk people. Most of whom are in faith crisis and as we've traveled the questions we've received. We felt that this book in particular is necessary. We hear a lot of people. Calling it the culmination of the other three books and i think to a large extent. It's right but is that we going back to the very beginning. The very beginning of the restoration and the very beginning of the church of jesus christ and and i do love that idea that we are restoration church when not a reformation church and i think we really wanted to tackle that issue taco where we had come from from the fourth century and try and recuperate those things that were lost from the fourth century on winds that were found an early christianity and we do feel that the gospel jesus crisis restoring that so this was our our appraise.

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Would you call it a him. Restauration view celebratory him to the restoration. We i think that captures it well to say that. This is the culmination we have. Kind of attacked piecemeal. What we see is what we think are historically introduced misconceptions about key doctrinal points in the past we've dealt with the nature of god and christ's role as healer and we just tried to kind of comprehensive reexamination of our entire religious vocabulary. Much of which. I think is still really contaminated by protestant inheritance we forget. Just how. Deeply embedded joseph smith and other nineteenth century mormons were in a protestant culture and so their language was entirely informed by protestant conceptions paradigm. Yet you give an example of that would that would look like you're sure yeah one one example we could talk about would be

repentance which in its first translation into the latin bible into the holgate was translated as do pennants and so throughout most of christian history the catholic church instituted pennants as right as a sacrament. That involved kind of hanes some kind of a penalty for sin committed when of course the original term is mattino. Oh which means to have a change of heart and even today we have connotations of the earlier translation when we when we talk about repentance. We also talk. We often talk about a kind of penalty that we have to pay to show our earnestness right that we have to somehow we make restitution we we have to suffer to some extent when that is just really a desecration. I think of christ's teaching which is an invitation to retrain your heart in greek consistency with the values of christian life. Yeah and that's i appreciate and we'll we'll definitely get into repentance and sin in those things but just this idea of like one quote from books as but as i reflected on this. I've come to realize it isn't that i've learned new things about god. Rather that i have unlearn things about god unhealthy incorrect culturally informed principles about god which have in fact distance me from god. And that's i think you're quoting a student in that context. But that's an interesting thing because we see the gospels like a venue where or the churches of anywhere you can come to learn about god but sometimes it acts as a venue to things that were supposed to learn absolutely and i think this goes along with what her was saying. The idea of a god that has crept into the scriptural texts even the book of moment in the doctrine covenants and again. It's all it's all about paradigm are working within religious and cultural paradigm swoon. They're writing these things. So the idea of god particularly in the old testament is portrayed as wrathful bench full genocidal whereas the god of moses chapter seven is vulnerable a weeping god who chose to set his heart upon us. And we're both very much influenced by. Julian of norwich was a fifteenth century. English mystic writer. Who who just said that wrath and love are two contrary con have both in the same person especially if that person as divine because then you would have a schizophrenic. God and that would be rather terrifying. Yeah so we both really feel that god is either all good. Or he's not god or if he's bad or malevolent then he's gone either. Yes so we do really do think that this is what the restoration is doing is bringing back. This idea of god who has who loves us with an unyielding love and that love is a primary characteristic and anything that mitigates that love is not divine and not god her would you say yeah and of course every christian and members of almost every faith community on the planet would say well we believe in love and we believe that god is a god of love but part of what we're trying to track in. This book is the way in which the we call. The theology of love was horribly reconfigured and such a way as to justify all kinds of things in the name of la crusades like the crusades and and the spanish inquisition and burning at the stake. And all of those kinds of things that have been done in the name of love show.

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That love is a very flexible malleable concept. And what we are trying to do. Here's to recuperate. A a theology of love that is consistent both with the first two or three christian centuries and with joseph. Smith's teachings in this regard. And i think i think it's worth pointing out that. Joseph smith was never harsher in his criticism. Then he was when he talked about the influence of the creeds of christianity. I mean we all know the famous phrase. The creeds were

an abomination but we forget that that he actually canonized revelation sexual in two thousand three of the doctrine covenants where he talked about the damning. Hand that riveted. The creeds of the fathers who have inherited lies upon the hearts of the children had filled the world with confusion. That's pretty strong line yet. It's an and so it seems to me that what he's to us that what he's saying. Is there all of these subtle ways in which those preconceptions of christianity that had gone off the rails have infiltrated our hearts and minds and language into this book is an attempt to try to rethink how we might kind of clear the detritus of a fallen christianity and present a clear view of restoration principles. Yeah this i really appreciate it. Because i i've been doing that. A steady in in thought about this concept of of a disappointed. God where it's almost like in our our faith tradition and others. It's like yeah. I i know i learned a young age that god loves me. I know he loves me. But he's just perpetually disappointed in me and to me like kits me in the heart. Like you've missed it like and in my opinion it almost feels like i can't see how grace and disappointment can coexist in god exactly. I think i think you're exactly right. Kurt and i think what we'd do. I think what has made it very uncomfortable. Also for so many people off as tradition is the fact that we're trying to put these in consonant words together and say that they belong when they don't and it makes everybody feel really uncomfortable and i think that's a problem. I think that's why people are having a good look. Fm galiam means good news. And if it's good news. There is nothing in there to sally it but as soon as you start talking about god being disappointed then you have affectively created this massive rift between you and god which god does not want and so that and we've noticed that with a lot of the language that it it makes us feel less lovable less worthy. That's another word. We've been an what we are trying to bring to light in this book. Is that god anything and everything. We could possibly think that is beautiful. God is true and we both believe that. If it's true it's going to be beautiful. it's not going to feel. It makes us feel worse about ourselves. Life is hard enough as it is and if it's beautiful it's true and it seems like such a simple but there's i do that. How is this making me. Feel it enlighten my mind. Does it expand my heart or does it. Constrict my mind and harrow. My heart because one of those is divine and the other one is not here in another quote from from a student says i was. I was the kind of child who heard. I am a child of god and instead of taking too hard the message of divine love trembled at the second verse helped me to understand his words before it grows too late as we have this. This god this after us right right and and not only that we see all of these grills resigned. Dole was being shot you know before it grows too late and then that shot at. I'm cast out of his presence. And i am. I am no longer with my family. And that's very disconcerting for primary children who are raised on the song that you know god is love and that families can be together forever and then they grow up and they learned that actually. That's not true because if a family member does this this this or this then the family will be divided asunder this. You know no more family together. I was not raised. Lds but i have to say were that would be very disquieting for me growing up and then suddenly a my goodness. I'm not going to be with my family forever. I think what's a little bit different about this book in our approach in this book is it rather than just kind of tackle these concepts and terms one by one in isolation and rework them. We're trying to suggest that if we just keep in mind how radically different the story is that. The restoration house then then a whole series of misconceptions fall by the wayside so for example if we would just stop using the word of the fall we don't believe in the fall and eighteen.

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Fortyish journalist attended a sermon. Joe gave in washington dc and in his report. He's at the most striking thing he noticed. Was that joseph. Smith seemed to deny that there was such thing as a fall wasn't a fall. It was an ascent because we believe that part of the plan from the beginning was that adam and eve would would create the doorway for the entry of our spirits into mortality so that we could learn by experience to taste the bitter and learned to prize the sweet. And the good so in that context. How can god be disappointed. Part of the plan is for us to air and to learn by right mistakes and we're going to suffer all kinds of collateral damage along the way but that's that's the point life is supposed to be educative and so if we could understand that that are heavily. Parents are the ever faithful tutors dedicated to making sure that we get through the process successfully rather than thinking them of judges waiting to evaluate our performance. Then it is just the difference between night and day and this is so exciting because we see all of these themes picked up by patristic fathers order the before the fourth century. Greek fathers. I need to stipulate the the latin fathers. We went into punitive atonement theory which was unfortunate but with the greeks. Me really had this optimistic view of life that as terrel said this was an etiquette appear in richardson grow into adult under the tutelage of god that was taught so explicitly by ear rene site as well as origin but for me being a woman. Changing the genesis of our narrative is massive because for women christian women particularly although other women have been embroiled in this with eve categorized as the one who initiated the four and. She is the one who is to blame. And so quite frankly. The condition of women in christianity has been really rather awful and really rather bleak. Because you know hammett screamed his mother frailty thy name is woman but he could have been doing that to eve frailty thy name and you know we've been fine. We men of the world would have been absolutely fine. Had you not been in the garden you'd have just so for me. It's so emancipating. The gospel of jesus christ restored. Because you do it in in our narration. The story eve becomes a heroine of the human family. As i. you know adamus would hold him back so sure that i want to do this. Looks trixie and she goes foot forward. And and that's extraordinary for me as a single entity woman and a for all of my my women friends and for our daughters. It's so important. I mean it changes everything that we it allows us into much more equaling collaborative role with men rather than just you know. Yes exactly so. It sounds like i mean the the general concept of we have such these diverse unique dynamic doctrines that sometimes on the on the surface of of where the languages spoken. These terms like the fall families can be together forever with the best intentions they sort of skew. How we these deeper doctrines that a good way to say it. Yeah absolutely and part of the problem. I think derives from the fact that we have looked for common vocabulary right for the best of reasons best of intentions you know. We've wanted to build bridges. But the fact of the matter is if latter day saint ism doesn't offer a radically revolutionary new paradigm for understanding god and christ and human nature and. Then what was the purpose right. We have just tinkered around the edges and just the and and if you look at the statistics everybody's aware of the fact that the fastest growing religion is the nuns. It's true that the latter day saints are suffering number defections but relative to other faiths. Were actually doing better. They are suffering nutrition at a higher rate than we are. Christianity is in crisis the titanic is sinking and the last thing we should be doing is trying to

swim back to the titanic and yet it seems too often. That's what we're trying to do. Trenton says no no where christian no share these people here and said we should be saying. No actually we offer a refreshingly different alternative and this is what it is. We offer restoration. Yeah yeah awful yes. It does every time i said. What does that look like in our day to day. Practices latter-day saints whether we're leaders are attending church sitting in a sunday school class zoom sunday school class. Whatever it is. How can we avoid this. This part of our human nature where we wanna we wanna simplify things so that we can communicate it but we also don't want to skew the precious doctrines i think if doctrines are going to be precious. That game to be easily easily understood is convoluted that we need to look very closely as what at what is being taught and we do feel that changing the vocabulary or reverting the vocabulary to a much clearer understanding and a clear definition in the early centuries helps i think it empowers us as individuals and as a people to work collaboratively for that end what.

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We're seeing with traditional christianity. Is this this emphasis on sin as emphasis of not being worthy eight. The up prehensile. Yes that we may be judged and we will inevitably not make it. It affects the way we live our lives. It affects our relationships with our with our loved ones. And with you know people around us you know people at work with us whereas if we have this conception of spirits who live eternally that we akon substantial that would parley p pratt's favorite word con substantial with divinity. Just not as advanced as they are and that we all were in this meeting a pre mortem missing and we. We either volunteered or said. I think this is probably what we did. We would like to be as you are beautiful. You are full of love. We would like to be there. And then suddenly that empowering because it's we chose to come. We knew the difficulty is that we. I don't believe we knew them exactly individually but we need the earth. Life is going to be extremely hard but we also know and i think we sometimes we repeat verses so often that they just become cliché but moises one thirty nine is just extraordinary if we look at that and we recognize that this is definitively that their work. And the glory is to bring to pass immortality and immortalized of every single human. Being than that. Just i you know. It just strengthens you. It enlightens your mind. Vilifies your heart and it's like you want to work collaboratively with god so you then start looking outwards to other people so you not so self centered unfortunate thing about all of this virulent vocabulary. Is that it. In-necessarily centers ourselves on our self ourselves. What can i do about my sent. What can i do about my worthiness. So it becomes very constricted whereas if we're thinking of eternal lives as being for everyone and communal then naturally our heart and our minds go outwards and both terrible. And i feel that the end the end result of our our education here is i on an apocalypse not armageddon and i think we misread that we knew we. We hear that the earth she'll be consumed with fire and because we're post nine hundred and forty five where all thinking nuclear holocaust but the the the probably the most stunning vital image of the holy spirit is fire. So if he were to see the earth being consumed by the holy spirit disorderly and it changes everything absolutely dramatically seismically. And so we are not fearful of what's to come but we're looking forward to that. I'm talking too much. But we've been invited by god to collaborate and a covenant sing winning that's really encouraging in this regard. Is i can remember growing

up in the church in the seventies and there was such a focus on the second coming preparing for the second. Come getting year supply and there was this conception that we mormons are going to hunker down while the world burns right and now that anybody specifically said that that was the feeling that we had in the design would be this kind of refuge behind castle walls where we were safe. But if you listen to the way the brethren have been talking about zion in the last decade or so they are continually invoking the notion of a worldwide zion that transcends culture and religion that incorporates the entire human family all people who are striving to do good and so i think that is a day saints. Were much better position today than we were in earlier. Generations to have as fiona said this look outward rather than this focus inward that enabled us. I think to be more constructive. Participants in building this global zion and we have unique contribution to make in that regard. We we're not the only ones with contributions but ours are unique. Yeah and you referenced. The seventies or sort of had that feeling and i would imagine there's some individuals. Obviously you know the general message from the brother and whatnot of maybe the more clear more of a world like you mentioned worldwide. Would you would we do when maybe when word echo chamber. It's sort of has seems like it's Some of these points are being seen in that.

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There's those misconceptions that are coming up to the surface more likely in in certain sunday school or or whatnot because you mentioned it. Use the word cliché. And it seems like our brain files things away in clichés. The our testimonies began begin to sound cliché with another churches true. And you know these which are great statements. But they're almost empty in their delivery right. And so how do we avoid that. You know on a more local level of getting these misconceptions lead others a doctrinal knowledge of faith. That makes sense too convoluted but well. It's always a difficult task to just become better. Informed about our own tradition in our own in our own belief system but that's ultimately what it boils down to. I think another another problem that is relevant here is is the tribalism that has just become right endemic in american society. I was conversing with a group of saints from scotland yesterday by by zil and they asked. So what's so. What's happening in the american church his days as they look at our political system implode and i said well the most tragic thing that i'm witnessing the moment is a kind of mirror image of our political factionalism replicating itself in the church. Where we find as it seems to be never before these extremely right neo orthodox kind of intransigent fundamentalist attitudes on the one hand. And then you've got this kind of rampant unfettered progressive progressivism on the other and and we're replicating the rhetoric of the political sphere. Our own enron church. It seems to me i mean. I'm not online that much but enough to know that that's happening. And the tragedy. Is that you if you studied the first couple of christian centuries and you ask. What was it that christians were really renowned for the roman empire and one thing stands out again and again and again there weren't that many contemporaries who wrote about the christians but there were a handful and they all point to the same thing they say. You know the thing about these christians. They really love each other. I mean there's this incredible intra-group loyalty and devotion to each other. And they call each other brothers and sisters. And i think the whole world or their brothers and sisters as the

frequently mocked for that and so the real shame is that if we were really fully replicating the church that we purport to be we would be renowned in the world this moment as kind of exception to the tribalism that we see everywhere else. An but until we completely eradicate racism and classicism and these other kinds of 'isms in our own communities than than we we have failed in that imperative. Well here president nelson in particular in is speaking about this sort of thing this in a cool back to community and you know just the idea of your not to be speed supporting conspiracy theories on either side which is the fact that has gotten to the stage where they have to say to modify the handbook of instructions to warn against that kind of extreme factionalism. Yeah and i think. I my feeling is that if we put zayn at the center and tear arthritis not as though the early christians were of the same type they would diffuse there. Were rich were poor. They were educated. They were not educated. We have a tendency to form cliques. They didn't so how was it that they were able immune from that didn't last forever of course but i think the idea is zone. They caught it and the fact of the matter is that everybody would eventually return to the divine foul. I think that's the key right there. When section seventy six was restored in eighteen thirty two it was read by early members of the church as a quasi universalist declaration than everybody would inherit kingdom of glory and there was so much rebellion against at parley. Pratt had to go in and perform a number of excommunications in church courts in new york. Missionaries in england. Were instructed to stop teaching sections seventy-six because latter-day saints wanted to be special. You want don't feel like no heaven is going to be stratified. And they'll be us not the others and yet the more that we recognize that joseph. Smith's vision was at no are heavily. Parents would bring every child back to the table. Then that our hearts. I think to a much more generous vision of our neighbor of our fellow here lean. I think our problem is and it's not just ours is everybody's problem is that we love to create idols and And we have to be very very careful because we well. The catholics have a pope. Nobody really pays any attention to him. But we have a prophet. Nasa joke is that we really consider him. And my my concern is that many of us have an.

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I love catholicism. Because of this quite frankly because i could no longer see christ. He was obscured primarily by his mother. But it was by myriad of saints. And that's what i loved. When i learned about this gospel was christ was front and center. As i've lived within the community for a number of years. I see more comments about following the prophet and sheer mo- vocabulary. The prophet the prophet the prophet. And i think it's a -cluded vision and many of us. No longer can see christ and i think we do i. It's it's to be expected. We all do that. We all put up idols whether we're christian non-christian or whatever but we need to guard against that. I think we think because this is the restored gospel. We don't have to be careful. I think perhaps because it's the restored gospel. We need to be very very careful. That christ always remains front and center. And i think it will help with one of the other things it would also it. Would it would help considerably with these new revelations coming out you know this idea of. We can move. We are living church and so we're going to move going to change. I think a lot of our problem is that we are actually very evangelical. And if we've tracked evangelicalism very very closely. And i think that therein lies our problem for example most lds. Ms saints take the scriptural texts

literally. And that's really unfortunate because we're going to get ourselves in so much trouble if we think that god really is capable of massacring innocent egyptian children and then try and validate that often talk about that with the goat of love with his expensive love. So i think that's been a problem. In sunday school classes as inability to see the scriptures really as more literary text rather than as factual a quote. Brigham young where he talks about this right that bibles full of good angels angels. Good people bad people right and this is the nation. I think he three and it's interesting because in our e think of our typical dialogue maybe in a sunday school class in sort of the the ponds of our discussion are will said this. The scripture says this and therefore there's my proof it's there is in black and white and the thinkings done right where these doctrines and concepts. There's such a wrestle with them or there's more that can be found as we we sit and and this is a problem that that all christians have faced going back to the foundation of the church and that many still face today which is how do you deal with either discordance scriptures. That seem at odds with each other or scriptures seemed to violate what we believe to be true of the nature of god and turns out that origin in the second century was already proposing a kind of litmus test and it was the same with john. john wesley. Use with cs lewis invoked all three of them said essentially the same thing they said if you eat anything in the scripture or interpret anything in the scripture to be contrary to you know to be true of the goodness and worthiness of then you're reading wrong or it's an error and see us lewis said if something that i know to be. True of god's goodness and love comes into conflict with something. I'm reading in scriptures. I'm gonna go with goodness and love of god interesting and so i think it's clear. Joseph smith was so emphatic. On this point right. I mean a dozen times were told in the book of warm that planet things were taken out of the things we're put in. Joseph said many of the things in scripture do not accord with the revelations of the holy ghost to me and so. I think that we need to impute more authority and purity to those latter-day revelations that redefine god for us Like the book of moses that says no this is the god that we recognize worship. The god who weeps with us who suffers with us in her pain. Who's greatest sadness. We read moses. Seven is not because we're you. Don't wash dishonoring him right. But because we're mistreating each other. Yeah i mean what a remarkable kind of just destruction of this notion of a sovereign regal authority figure and replacement by a father who hates to see his children at as reminds me a few months ago. I was reading in jacob and just sort of got to the point right sat back and i'm just like jacob. I'm just not. I'm just not feeling you right now like i mean i think we can sit in the same sunday school class right now but just the tone in the way you're coming across. I'm just not. You know that. Goodness of god. I wasn't finding it right but then i had this of sort of guilt like hey. He made it past the the editorial staff of the book of mormon. Like if it's in there like you shouldn't critique it but i think it's it's healthy to step back and say like i don't see probably wouldn't talk like jacob talk even though we're same gospel. He's got a different method limitations so important. That's wife and often quotes.

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Brigham young. Who said if the book of mormon were translated today it would be translated in an entirely different way than it was for nineteen thirty audience. Yeah and so you know the lord tells us again and again that he speaks to us in our own language according to our own right

preparedness and readiness to accept his word. What I love about us Scriptural Texas the fact that yes you will see definitely see that nineteenth century paradigms that idea that God is sovereign vassals. It'll be there that we need to be punished that we are undeserving of God's love. It's very nineteenth century as very puritan but on the other hand would so I love this but the living scriptures was annual come across these extraordinary breathtaking things. Then I don't think the nineteenth century read would even notice but because our minds are different paradigms changing we will notice so I don't know how many times I read Moses seven before really occurred to me what was being stated about God the fact that you know he went and inuk obviously his paradigm was really ruffled because he says how has it posted a wait a minute. I'm freaking out you. God and you are weeping. You have here what is going on. I notice Osi weeping with God so can you please explain this to me and so go does. But it's lovely to see those in the restoration texts that we are moving to. Interference startled every known them by what we're reading in scripture not inclusive that should never expire right ahead. So just thinking about the leader's out there thinking like I got. I need some certainty here. That I can anchor into his. I'm guiding these you know the the local organization of the church it kind of feels You know if you're telling me we should you know really question the the tone or how the scriptures are read and and what do we. How do we reconcile that. Or what would you say to a leader. Who's maybe uncomfortable about that director. Okay I would start off. By pointing to the first chapter of Nathan first book and Yvette chapter thirteen and this is really important because this is where we are having a kind of global vision and interpretation of what's taking place in the latter days and an angel is describing for e phi and explicatives what he seen in this vision of futurity and at one point in verse thirty two. He provides a diagnosis. That we think could be such a key to reevaluating how we think about sin and guilt and culpability and kindred concepts because the angel tells me by that because of the loss of the plane and precious things. The world is in an awful state of wounded nece now even if you read in the modern version which adjusts that slightly to say. An state of awful blindness would wounded nissim blindness. Having common in both cases were not responsible for the wounded nece. It wasn't our fault. And that's with the angels telling me phi he saying. Look the nature a meeting between the lines. The nature of God has been so deformed the principles of the gospels have been so completely mangled that people are going to incur kinds of emotional and spiritual wounds ecological and psychological traumas as a result of how they understand themselves their place in the universe the relationship to God and so the angel promises and the Lord won't suffer them to remain in that condition. Why while the restoration will come about new scriptural. Come about a new. Understanding of God will come about so. I think as leaders. We need to be more attuned. To the fact that we are all traumatized to greater or lesser degrees we inherit traumas. We experience them at the hands of inept parents as we so often were or of cruel classmates or peers or false assumption. Things that we're hearing sunny school class and so if we can begin from that perspective of empathy and compassion and understanding that I think the angel was trying to enjoying and if I and his successors that would be a good starting place that I suppose if I am trying to think if I were in in a position I would think I would keep coming back to the love of God because we really don't believe that God loves us. Most of us not unyieldingly. Not absolutely mean he will. He will love us. They will love us. If I and I think we need to if we were able to delete if from capillary and just keep restating that God loves us absolutely the father of

the prodigal son right exactly. And that's yeah that that is that really is actually keep we're telling the story of the prodigal son and you know that the father is waiting for him you know.

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He's the i justin kinser. We love his song about the prodigal son. he's way i don't care where you've been just come home. If we were able to generate within people's hearts and minds that this is the god we are worshipping. I think so. Many other things would fool because so when they're reading scripture and they come across a particularly malevolent god in the scriptural tax. They'll have something does this. Does this gel with the god of the restoration. This absolute god of inuk or does it not and then we have to decide because we can't we can't keep carrying both is weighing too much on our hearts and minds and then we do what. Brigham did so k. Okay this does not. This is not worthy of the god. I know exists. Who loves me with an absolute lot. Who also these people with absolute love. So is he really capable of destroying is children. And i think once we start entertaining those ideas of putting those things naturally fall into place in. I think it's easy for people. Say well the book came from the restoration. So shouldn't that. God be overwhelmingly there which i mean a lot of places it is but it should be consistently clear within each. I net copy because the book of moment of the nineteenth century was talking to a nineteenth century. Puritan sensibility what the what. The book of mormon ended up being was a bridge so people who were thinking of moving from their traditions into the new tradition. It have to have a vocabulary with which they were familiar. They would have to have ideas of god with which they were familiar. And you do have them in the book of mormon but the fact of the matter is you also have the great visions of the tree of life and those are quite extraordinary because as ancient hebrews stood the tree of life was a representation of heavenly mother and for me. It's very interesting as we see. Sort of the resurgence of heavily mother in our rhetoric. And i in our ideas that for me. The book of mormon is a chalice that holds that she was completely of the skated in the biblical texts by kings is reforms. Interestingly enough but i just love the idea that god knows and he will speak when his people already. And i think the book of mormon does that beautifully. It spoke to nineteenth century sensibilities but it's also speaking twenty-first century sent spinach. And let me if. I may just read one passage from george q cannon because i think it's one of the most profoundly important things ever said about revelation whether that revelation is to us to prophets or to the authors of scripture. And he speaking. Here's a member of the first presidency. And i wish every latter day saint would take this to heart. He said the revelation we may get imperfect at times because of our fallen condition and because of our failure to comprehend the nature of it comes from god man is but the medium the instrument the conduit through which it flows we believe in revelation it may come dim mak distinct come sometimes the degree of vagueness we do not like why because of our imperfection because we are not prepared to receive it as it comes in it's purity in its fullness from god. He is not to blame for this That's helpful so you know. I think the single most common air that we make as latter-day saints is to begin any statement with the phrase. why did god x. or why couldn't god z. Because an and almost all those cases the answer is will because he's bound by our agency right. He can't just impose understanding that we're not prepared to receive. Yeah and i think that's really important. We really do need dash two pieces. Sovereign

god this king and of course we understand why you know. God was portrayed as a sovereign because all leaders you know we're portrayed as sovereigns oh kings or rulers but once such as shattered which. I think it is really important. We will understand that. It's difficult for us to understand divine speech but god will never give up trying to talk to us. So i think if we are able to unclutter minds and understand that that god is our father. He's not sovereign. He really wants science. And i for me. I love that verse where we are promise. That christ crucial come with cy on to us to embrace zaylon here and this will be his home so those sorts of things you know this idea of the perfect divine democracy really. I think really helps in that regard to be patient with ourselves and be more patient with adidas. I appreciate this that you know that quote in your remarks because going as we go to the book of mormon to find christ to find the true nature of god there's different voices and perspectives and ways that things are phrased that are imperfect and it's almost like yet maybe god could have laid it out clearly black and white there.

00:45:15 - 00:50:11

But the fact that there is more nuance there causes us to engage with it and maybe seek god deeper level rather than just finding him right at the surface right and these people are writing from their own experiences so if we look at the book of moment as a whole who edited it may we we get it from whom who was the last scribe. It was moment and what was he. He was a general in a war of genocide. And i i've met toothy generals in my life and i can tell you they they ought nuanced pin nuances people. Very black and very y. They've never edited. Your any of your books now wouldn't wanted. It's just too much fluidity. So we're going to see that in the book of mormon we're going to see this very black and white narrative he is the editor so you have the voices of other people but the primary voice in the book of mormon is his and he is engaged in a war of genocide. That's going to change the sensibility of his and also of the texts that he uses and how he edits. I just think the parable of the treasure in the field speeches ruined. Matthew is at fifteen that whether you're thinking about the church and there's a treasure in the midst of the church but we have to take the whole field right. Yeah old rubber boots and license plates garbage. But there's a treasure there. And i think the same is true of the scriptures. I think that's why we have to search in every every now and then you get these moments of just right. Just brilliant light the breaks through. I love that moment. In christ's visit beneath fights when he says come into me and repent that i may he'll you because suddenly now we're at the other end of the book of mormon and we have this perfect kind of book end that there's a wounded world and then christ comes that he may heal us and he's not here talking about physical maladies right. He's talking about change. Your hearts and minds. That i can heal you. He doesn't use the word. Forgive because it seems to me that what we're told there as well as in the book of luke is at sin is just one of many forms of wounded nece that we suffer. And i love this. The concept of wounded ness Sometimes i was reading. Does it really talk about winded. That wounded us that much in the book of mormon and sure enough there. It is right and because oftentimes in our religious culture especially with repentance. It's easy to see sin as like you've taken an action that caused a wound rather than while you are wounded and therefore you sin right so help us unpack this idea especially as leaders. I remember as a

bishop sort of you know the same person kept coming back and back and back in. You're thinking just stop this. you know what. What's the problem here. So help us unpack. This idea of wounded ness well. It's extraordinary because there is so much literature now being produced on trauma and vessel funda faulk says that you know. We usually associate trauma with returning veterans. But he says it's in our homes everywhere. It's all around. Us are all wounded. And i think once the move from sin to trauma is made that what we have in common humanity is that we're all wounded. It could be genetic wounded nece at sea psychopathic sociopathic all these panties that you know come through generations so when you sing god will curse the children until the third and fourth generation. Well well that's really mean. What if they don't you but if you see that as wounded nece and his trauma being carried through the generations send yes absolutely and i think the drama studies really started happening when people psychiatrists doing third generation the generation of holocaust survivors and their duty was to remember remember. Never forget but they couldn't. It was too much trauma for them to carry. Couldn't do that anymore. So i think that's what really put us into drama study so i think it'd paradigm shifting so is seeing that and so when we look at everybody so in brian stevenson's magnificent book just mercy. He goes back through all of the prisoners. He's defending on capitol row yet for an death-row who are waiting capital punishment and he traces their lives and at the very beginning in their young years. There's trauma there is wounded us and it. Just you know just piles up. Pas up until behavior is no longer acceptable or cannot be is is threatening but i think once we shift our paradigm from sin to wounded nece. God was saying that we have in our scriptures at wonderful so in genesis chapter three verse. Twenty two goad is talking about the results of of having eaten of the tree of knowledge and he says they have become as one of us knowing good and evil experiencing it.

00:50:11 - 00:55:04

We use a hebraic language. So we know that sent than eve uses exact same language in her dejoy moses. Five eleven have been one of the fruit. We never should have known and we never should have experienced good and evil exactly the same language and then we go to moses six and god redefines evil as bitter. It's something you ingest something that may be poisonous at something that is harmful and once we change that category from sindh something that is harmful. that is an christ. Wants to heal you of that then suddenly the whole paradigm shifts to a much more optimistic. You know that christ and god are attempting to hilo. They understand that we have been wounded. An your i would just. We're not saying that sin doesn't exist right. We we certainly can. But what. I think what we're trying to say is the way that we approach it and think about it and classify it has a very real day-to-day impact on the we treat ourselves and how we treat others and i think one of the best examples at fiona has given before is that if some were to say otc that person over there will there sinner. They did so and so then that creates a distance nations. But if you were to say dc that person there. They've suffered such wounded nece in their life. And that makes us want to minister to assistant to heal. And so it draws us rather than repels us so language language matters to different and especially especially in the context like a more tactical context like being a bishop when you an individual comes in and it's all about that sin and what they did rather than you know a lot of

people easy to start there and focus on the behavior and stopping that but to step back and say well. Let's search deeper. Where's the wounded. Nece here that that caused us which doesn't remove accountability from that individual but gives you a place of actually turning to the savior and offering him to step into that wound rather than just fix this thing and make it go away. That's really useful anything else. As far as the sin repentance wounded nece that we haven't touched on that may be another terms. We've redefined in aleve. I just another like even the concept of you talk about for the hebrews. Atonement was of the right of healing in right being. Rit like that's he isn't this Now traditionally classified but just seeing it as a right like a a process that the savior's healing us rather than fixing all these mistakes. That just have god rolling his eyes that we can't believe he did we think also can say there's a little bit of mystery concerning the route. Kp are of atonement in hebrew language. Many scholars have long thought that it means to cover it comes from meaning to cover wound but but more recent scholarship has suggested no it better definition would actually to heal and so it is in fact very possible that the very concept of atonement in hebrew thought and ritual was a healing ritual. I think what's also interesting. Is that We really deviated from early christian theology as to atonement. We always associated cement with across. And that's not where it is. The atonement is resurrection. Making us at one bringing us one together. And i just love the early descriptions of the eucharist. It was called the bread of immortality. The idea was at once. You started eating the bread of the eucharist. Resurrection started within you. So what we were all aiming for with resurrection. But i do think we get stuck on the cross and then that resurrection mitigated so then. Then we do christ disservice because he can heal us from some wounds can save us from some sense but not all of them. In which case he's completely failed as the saviour in the heel of the world. And so for me that for me. Personally that's been very helpful to take the crucifixion. So for the early church fathers. It was enunciation. Such incarnation enunciation was important to but the incarnation becoming man and the resurrection. So god rescuing us from death. And i think there is this lovely quote the time to find. Okay yes sir. This is aaron hernandez for christ was to redeem man who had been dragged into slavery and was held by death in order that death might be slain by man and man should go forth from the bondage of death so the bondage of death rather than sin death was what prevented us from returning to a heavenly heavenly parents. And then then we i i do love. The eastern orthodox thinkers one of my favorite nicolae cuba's in the mid twentieth century.

00:55:04 - 01:00:01

Gordon trouble by communist government for everything. But i love this because he says no soul will be saved in isolation all must be saved together or not be saved at all. So that's the refers to christ's atonement. He either a tones for everyone. Oh no one. So this idea of zion again that he seeing us as individuals in a community and that's rich will be see ourselves in a community because so much we can do in. The book maroon replicates that that whole kind of movement from the one to the many right lee high himself his family and then all of his posterity genus himself. His the neophytes in the late nights. So there's this continual movement that is expansive and atonement hasn't been achieved until it encompasses everyone and i appreciate you know that we get stuck on the cross in the in our own personal repentance process we get

stuck in the suffering right when you think yes. Christ suffered this hurts. It's supposed to hurt. And i can't believe i done this. And that's where the shame enters right but instead focus on the the miracle. The the resurrection the healing ryan. There's so much redemption their adelson absolutely because otherwise we get stuck in our sent me call move beyond it because even though forgiveness might be granted we can't move. It's very difficult to move ourselves out of shame. So symposia shame and guilt. They're both selfish. We were trying to shift right to talking more about remorse. Remorse other directed. Sorry pain i caused you. Not because i disappointed myself. Yeah so we thinking that if we this is will about the american church. I'm not sure this afflicts church in other countries but the american church is very much. Like the american body politic. It's really focused on the individual and almost so much so that the individual is seen over and apart from community. And it's in a community in which we are going to be healed and saved and in which we are going to see the christ when he returns so then as individuals. We have a responsibility to others in the community. And this is one place where we were. We can't make compromises where we have to push back. I think against certain cultural trends typical of the younger generations. I taught religion for many years at the university of richmond. And i'd often start class by saying how many of you in here are religious and no or one hand would go up. How many of you are spiritual. Every hand goes out and plant. But the difference is yuna said spirituality is usually about the self what is by standing before god. How do i feel the spirit. How am i experiencing my religion and so people who say well. I don't really believe in institutional religion what they're really saying. Is i want to go and indulge my own feelings and needs whereas religion. The root of course is larry to connect or to be bound to others. And so i think we need to be more forthright and vigorous in defending the necessity and the role of an institutional church that provides a forum in a context and a medium for service in a larger context and for working as as part of a community toward a larger good. And it's extraordinary. I think how church too so incredibly well. And i think this this is really a fabulous place for community building and encouraging us to help members in the community and that's a step towards zion building is helping us to look outside of ourselves to other people and pull them into the community. Whatever things be conducive for terry myself about tis mwale. Covenants are absolutely key and again. I've been a member of the church for thirty years quite recently that i've realized how magnificent they are because what they are doing is helping us create community when we covenant. I wish we'd do it publicly or orally. We think we did in the early church but this idea of i will carry your burdens. I will mourn with you when you mourn. I will comfort you when you stand in need of comfort. That's extraordinary and we were rushing to get chrysler heels out but it was off to that that i realize that each member of the god head is there to ratify sanctifies. The god who carries out burdens away through his life into an article author is got the christ the god who wounds with us will be mourn is god the father and the god who comforts us where we stand in need of comfort is god the holy spirit and it suddenly. You're not a little person anymore. It's like you've been invited to collaborate in healing the world with a goat head. I mean that's extraordinary. Certainly i feel special like i couldn't do something. I actually do. Something to make the world a better place to help people's lives and to collaborate with a goatherd for me that changed all sorts of paradigm.

01:00:01 - 01:05:02

The least thing you do giving a phone a friend a phone call or you know this little promptings this little thoughts so we get you know. It seems so trivial. But i swear the person on the other end of the phone or the other end of the letter that means. I don't know it's just extraordinary. How much good we can in the world. Yeah in our invitation at love that you know this concept of community and we talked about wounded ness before that and i want to wrap up our conversation with the application of these two concepts because it seems to me that this wounded nece is important to recognize because that is what brings us together as a community when we all show up. And say oh. I'm wounded of look your wounded like. Let's sit in solitude in that wounded nece and see how we can both turn to christ and receive healing and perpetuate that healing through our service. Right it becomes difficult win. It's you know the likelihood of vulnerability in maybe a church setting as is lower. Where maybe as the bishop. I don't feel like i can Almost feel like. I'm not supposed to show my wounded nece. You know. yeah. I had some issues. There's my marriage isn't going great but others don't need to know about that. Is there any advice you'd give his. How do we perpetuate this culture of of wounded ness in so that we can then become a stronger community in zion. I think old paradigm shift should happen slowly and we are in a paradigm shift so perhaps a community would not actually be able to miss. My goodness ship. Said he has problems with his wife. What is coming to the world as god not supporters him. You know what i mean. We still there. Were in that transition. But i think we listen and we find more ways of of establishing or talking about our wounded ness with other people it will grow and then it will be a thing that everybody will rejoice and be healed by what you thought studying. Why would give more immediate than direct and practical solution or start to a solution and i think one of the most remarkable and beautiful practices in the latter day saint faith as fast and testimony meeting. It's also the most abused and time. What do you mean it off the rails out of control practices. But i think one of the problems is the lack of authenticity in the way we bear testimony and i think we were misdirected. Many years ago when we were given templates formats for exactly how the five thing five exactly which is terrible. that's not how testimony works not operates in scripture and so i look to my two favorite examples in scripture which are new fi when he's asked if he understands certain things and he says well. I know that god loves his children. But i don't know the meaning of all things. Yeah there's a testimony by or the blind man says no don't i don't know anything about this person except i was blind and now i see so i think there can be something very beautiful and very tender about testimony that is honest. The doesn't profess knowledge if we don't have knowledge the test to what we do know what we can safely affirm that can express our hopes and our longings as well as our certainties. And i think that is one way that we can move in the direction of a community. That is more trusting each other. Because we've shown her honesty and public. We have a very dear friend is is a number of years ago and she was living in salt lake and she was very very conservative ward and i think bishop dasta if she would consider burying her testimony that day and anyway she did but everything was no. I don't have a testimony of this. I don't know that and it was very authentic but essentially people would have said well that's not really a testimony because he just put everything in the negative so she fled geena but after that but she did but she did a test which she did. Remember that when. I row yes yes yes. I can't remember that pod when we read the scriptures as a family. I know that we better. That light comes into our home into our heart. Yeah

so she just gave his little glimpses of principles that she did believe then she fled because she was so worried about what the reaction would be of the world members and she said during the week she got emails and phone calls from world members. Who would say i. I'm not sure i understood for. He was saying but i felt the spirit. So you know she. She was saying she's being language with which terrible and i are very comfortable but obviously the congregation was not comfortable because they never heard anybody say. I'm not sure that jesus is the christ. It just wasn't part of the the vocabulary the language of testimony to which they were accustomed but they felt the spirit in her words and they reached out. They didn't know what to say. They didn't know how to say it but they wanted her to know that they loved her and they were very grateful for what she said. I think we're seeing more and more of that people saying i'm not entirely sure but i believe and people responding to that people will respond authenticity and we're very good judges. What is authentic. And what is not there. We'll have we. Obviously people need to check out the book again.

01:05:02 - 01:09:57

It's all things new rethinking sin salvation and everything in between anything. We haven't missed or quote or topic. You wanna make sure we hit before you're upper now. I think we covered it all now. Yes thank he. Any obviously can find the on amazon and other church bookstores and things like that any any other advice. You give people if they want to jump into this this content. Well if you have fallen in love is so many have with my wife's must beautiful. Yes right had no that. She has done an audio version of it. So that's available on audible that you should do this professionally right. Just forget writing and just be that the audible voice. Lisa gift if i start selling things selling selling my gifts for money for money well last question i have for you is. I know you've written many books and lead in many ways in in your own right but from this project. How is this book. This project helped you become a deeper disciple of jesus christ honeywell for me. I think what it is born testimony to me over that. This is the restoration church because we are bringing back. Joseph particularly brought back things that have been lost to the world. He wouldn't have been able to read greek and if he could have week he wouldn't have had access to the patristic fathers he just wouldn't have but when i was doing research for the christ to heels i was stunned by how closely joseph sounded like the patristic fathers in some cases it was verbatim and so for me that it solidifies my testimony of christ that he is the healer of the world and that it doesn't matter what religious persuasion we are. We are children of god. And that christ is all of humanity. And i think where the only church now saying that if we're not saying that we have every opportunity we have real reason to pronounce unequivocally that jesus is the christ ceus lewis is reputed to have said we read to know that we are not alone and the greatest benefit that i think i have personally experienced in writing. These books with fiona has been to try to traverse whole field of other voices. What joseph smith called holy men and women you know not of and to find one immerses oneself in the poets and mystics and patristic fathers of the past that when here's again and again a voice that is familiar and that makes one feel not so alone and it's been our experience meeting with countless members of the church. They do feel alone. they feel. They're the only ones who experienced quite that way. Or who have guy particular relationship to god or to the church. And what i've

come to discover is that there is a whole community of invisible. The invisible church that is out there that we have tried to give people a glimpse into and have experienced ourselves. and it's quite beautiful. That concludes my interview. With terrel and fiona gives a big shadow too damn so grateful that they welcome me into their home and allow me to ask them some questions about their new book. All things new definitely. Check it out and i wanna give a shout out to the people over at faith matters. If you're not familiar with faith matters one of the handful of Nonprofit third party organizations like leading saints who has admission and focused to helping build the kingdom of god and create content and resources. That are so helpful. I'd you'll probably hear more about faith matters in the future as we interview more of the authors that they publish and they have you know people like thomas konki patrick mason and there's so many individuals that are part of that team that are really creating some indepth dynamic content for the latter day saint community so definitely check them out at [faithmatters dot. Org](http://faithmattersdot.org) and remember if you know someone who'd be a great fit for the how i lead segment go to [leading saints dot org slash contact](http://leading-saints-dot-org-slash-contact) and submit your suggestion. It came as a result of a position of leadership which was imposed upon us. I the god of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of jesus christ when the declaration was made compared the own and only true and living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away and which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.