

LEADING SAINTS

Connecting Others to Jesus Through the Cross at Calvary | An Interview with John Hilton III

March 27, 2021

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Welcome back to another episode of the leading saints. Podcast if you've enjoyed content on this podcast. It's important that. I tell you about the leading saints newsletter that we send out every week this newsletter keeps you up to date on all the current leading saints content releases including podcasts articles online events and even live events. That might be happening in your own area in this newsletter. We also recommend some past episodes and written articles that you don't want to miss each week. We include additional leadership perspectives and thoughts. That you can only find in the weekly newsletter. So you definitely don't want to miss out to subscribe to the weekly newsletter simply text. The word lead to four seven four seven four seven or visit leading saints dot org slash. Subscribe again text. The word l. e. a. d. two four seven four seven four seven or visit leading saints dot org slash subscribe. So you don't miss any future leading saints content and vanessa. Wrecks from door in is supported leading sayings. I am just great for for your volleyball information. And knowledge other sharing best to help us become better disciples of jesus christ. It has really helped me to learn to find better ways new ways to worship the lord and also to minister offer keno so i wanna latch and i just always looking forward to the next episode to swim for my given inspiring. It has not been so much so thank you so much. Hey did you know that leading. Saints is a nonprofit organization. Dedicated to helping latter-day saints be better prepared to lead. Yeah yeah it really is and i'm curt franken. I'm the host of the leading saints podcast. We actually act aimed for this mission by creating content. That's what leading saint says. We are a content machine. And we do that. Through this podcast. We have online resources at leading saints dot. Org articles virtual summits and conferences. We've got a weekly newsletter that goes out and so make sure that you're plugged into all of these ways that we put out content and you're gonna hopefully like most of it maybe you'll disagree with some of it but that's okay that's how we learn. That's how we process. Information may be gained a deeper insight on our own accord by considering all sorts of different opinions and perspectives. When it comes to leadership now i must say happy easter to all of you. We have general conference coming up. That's always a

great time to easter. As well and i just love easter. Obviously we love. Jesus here the crucifixion. The resurrection i mean the whole package. It is awesome. And i'm so grateful for for christ in my life personally and i'm sure you share that faith and don't typically you know a lot of other podcast. They'll have like some christmas. Themed episodes around christmas or easter themed episodes around eastern. And i don't have my act together well enough to think that far ahead. I just want to interview really interesting people about leadership concepts but this episode is actually a very much. An easter themed episode. Because i interview john hilton. Who is the author of considering the cross. How calvary connects us with christ. Now isn't just an author. He is also an associate professor of scripture at brigham young university. John has a masters degree from harvard. In a phd from byu both in education. John is the author of the founder of our peace and many other books audio recordings and articles. He loves teaching reading snowboarding traveling serving and spending time with his family. He and his wife lanny have six children and john his close friend of mine. He has been on the podcasts. Many times before it was the most downloaded guest of twenty twenty will link to those things and this is a great conversation about the crucifixion. And how we can infuse our leadership with the doctrine of the crucifixion. And why it's so important. And how sometimes we sort of diminish it unintentionally now we can bring it more to the forefront will bless all of our lives so here is my interview with professor. John hilton the author of considering cross today. The opportunity to sit down with professor john hilton. How are you. John doing great goodwill we had a great fourteen minute dress rehearsal where we talked had some great conversation and then the software seemed to give out or bandwidth or something. So we're well rehearsed. Is that right. John we are warriors can be great all right so again. I want to congratulate you on being the number one downloaded episode of twenty twenty. You're you're number. Two overall in the history of leading saints if individuals have not heard the fence laws interview that we did it is well worth.

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listen and We a lot of truth bombs in there and Some perspectives that. We've gotten a lot of feedback from saying. This really is something. I've been thinking about and i think in your book and research your tickly that concept well so definitely be sure to check that out now. Johnny recently written a book called considering the cross and which is available in desert books in any bookstore where you frequent Church bookstore or amazon. And tell what was the. What was the question that you are trying to answer in writing. Considering the cross so i think as i was looking at my own practice of teaching the saviors atonement. I realized that whenever. I taught about the safest atonement i would focus on a semi. Maybe say a little bit about the crucifixion and then jump ahead to the resurrection. But president james e fallah said that any increase in her understanding of the savior's atoning sacrifice draws us closer to him in. I realized that there was a major part of christ's atonement namely his crucifixion. That i had kind of been skipping over so sort of this low hanging fruit this amazing opportunity to take part of his atoning sacrifice that i honestly had focused on very much to study it and then as a result dry closer to him and what i found was that actually i i think many other people especially among latter-day saints maybe have a tendency to discount calvary orton maybe not treated in the

same way we would treat a semi whereas in fact the scriptures heavily emphasized the toning significance of christ's crucifixion. There are two passages of scripture. That talk about christ's suffering for us in galatians and there's more than fifty that talk about christ dying for our sins on the cross and so there's actually a scriptural emphasis here that at least i personally had missed. Yeah that's an interesting concept. That i really appreciate especially in the first part of your book. Is you sort of unpack this concept of some of these cultural practices. We have that we sort of resist the cross or a symbol of the cross. Or we feel like that's not us that's other christian religions or evangelical catholics and for some reason in our cultural practice or belief. We've had this competition. Come up between calvary and the seminary that they were almost like two separate events when in reality they are all part of christ's work and so. What would you say to that leader. 'cause the typical you know we default to these phrases or concepts that we learned from young age of saying no john. We believe in living christ not the crucified cross and we wanna resist. That crucified cross because we want emphasized the the living. Christ maybe that's where that competition between these two locations come from. But how do you respond to those want to emphasize the living christ so first of all. There's no doubt that we believe in the living. Christ and without the living christ our hopes our dreams would all be dashed. There's there's no point in disseminate or calvary if we don't have an empty garden too. I think what it is stepping back in realizing that it's not either or just like as not either semi or calvary. It's both it's not just the living. Christ it's also the loving christ and if you think about that phrase the loving christ jesus christ himself personally defined his greatest act of love as his crucifixion. He said greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. And so it's not. What is it the loving christ or the living. Christ it's both you can't have one without the other. And so a focus on the love that jesus manifest himself and the love of his father shown on. The cross doesn't in any way detract from the importance of the living. Christ it gives us an additional lens in additional way to draw closer to the savior. Yeah go ahead. Maybe one thing that we can say is that it is really important. Separate the issue of the cross as a symbol versus the doctrinal significance of christ's crucifixion. And just as one example of many we could cite joseph smith and his writings and sermons. He never talks about christ suffering for our sins and get semi not once he only in fact mentions one time and that's as an example of doing the will of the father like christ it in december whereas he talks about the crucifixion more than thirty times including several references specifically to christ dying for our sins in fact he says that one of the fundamental principles of our religion is that jesus died and so the doctrinal significance christ. Fiction is unquestionable. Jesus himself said i was crucified for the sins of the world. The death wasn't just an afterthought some people have said will jesus overcome spiritual death and guess seventy and overcame physical death on the cross kind of separating the two elder gerald lund referred to that as a doctrinal error so we need to be very clear that whatever we might think about the process a symbol.

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There's a doctrinal power and reality associated with the crucifixion of jesus. Christ yeah and when we were dealing with such doctrines just enormous and to capture in our mortal mentality. You know the the suffering the atonement of jesus christ like to really understand. That is

difficult. So naturally as mortally sort of wanna package them in a box or a statement door or separating to like well this know the seventy was Was for this. And that calvary was for this. Other thing i remember statements from well-meaning i dunno their sunday school teachers or seminary teachers of saying like the the crucifixion was horrible. And awful and painful. But that would never measure up to what's happening semi but what happened to the seventy also is sort of hard to conceptualize. It's just sort of this thing that happened bleeding from every pore and while that must hurt. But i still don't is hard to relate where laying a man on across putting spikes through his hands and feet and in ways that are just hard to comprehend. There's almost this this poll of salvation in that that sacrifice because it was an act that can actually be unpacked a little bit more in in articulated clear. Yeah clearly we can't comprehend what christ experienced either in the cross orange assembly but i think we can do as much as we can within our own ability is so and like you said in in many ways. The crucifixion is easier to approach. At least we have. Maybe some ideas of what the scourging might have entailed but going back to the idea. That will whatever happened in. Calgary could in no way compare with what happened in disseminating. That's just simply not true. President nelson in two thousand eighteen talked. About what christ experiencing seventy and then he said that all of these sufferings were intensified as christ was cruelly crucified on calvary cross. So there's an intensification of whatever christ was experiencing in guests semi on the cross and again that's not to like make a comparison or to a competition between the two. But it's just to make clear that you'll hear. Sometimes people say well. Lots of people were crucified with unique about jesus is guest semi that also is. It misses the point. Jesus wasn't just crucified. He was crucified for our sins. There's a turning significance that's happening on the cross and in this experience of suffering for sins that we sometimes exclusively associated with guests semi is taking place at calvary as well. Yeah i love that and so you know one thing. Learning here is just sort of. 'cause i i want to get to the any advice. You have for leaders or individuals or teachers who are trying to know obviously. We hope that we're teaching about this. The atonement christ's sacrifice and his crucifixion. In gacem as well. But maybe there's some pitfalls there that we can fall into in one of those is maybe not turning it into a competition when you're teaching these things or separating them any other advice as far as for a leader who wants to teach the doctrine in a way without creating these faults concepts that don't help I think there are actually a lot of powerful pastoral principles that we can teach from the crucifixion. That might not come to the front of our minds if we're maybe putting the crucifixion on the side. So i think there's lots of situations maybe we can talk about some of these later if i'm helping a person who's struggling to overcome sin or struggling to feel confidence in their lives. They've had some serious setbacks for trials but one additional major opportunity. I think is to use the cross the crucifixion as a bridge building tool. So i serve my mission in denver colorado and honestly if i were on the streets or knocking on doors and i saw so wearing a cross necklace i would think of them as the other like. Oh that's that's different. They're not my kind of christian. Whereas if i were missionary today i'd be so excited i'd be like oh. Hey you're rang across necklace tell me what the crucifixion of jesus christ means to you and after they shared say well. I've got this amazing book here. It's called the book of mormon. Let let me read to you. What jesus taught the people in ancient america. He said my father sent me that. I might be lifted up upon the cross. Would you like to learn more about what jesus taught about his crucifixion. And i mean if this amazing bridge building between us and other christians. Whereas i think well i know for a

fact that many christians today to some extent view members of the church of jesus christ of latter day saints as the other. Because we don't use the cross in our worship in some of these useless to say that we don't believe in the atonement or we don't attach atoning significance to what happened on calvary so i think there's actually a great opportunity here for us to build bridges with people of other face as we highlight the things that we do believe in common about the atoning value of christ's crucifixion. Yeah and i remember this various teachings that i get from other missionaries on my mission that when someone brings up the cross or asked about the cross you know you can default things like well if a loved one was killed by a gun like would you wear that gun around your neck.

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You know it. Now that i think back and reflect on this debt. Dialogue isn't necessarily helpful in winning them over to uniting just in a foundational faith of jesus christ striped to say that. You're sort of off when you wear that cross. That's okay but we've sort of found a higher law that we're living right right. And i know that this is the leading saints podcast. It's not history podcast but would super interesting. Is that exact idea you said. Would you wear a gun or so a dagger around her neck. That's been around for centuries and a lot of people don't realize is during the protestant reformation times there was a big break in how people viewed the cross and so first centuries it was the cross was basically a catholic thing whereas baptist or methodist including many puritans who came over like the pilgrims were committed reject the symbol of the cross so in the eighteen hundreds. Joseph smith is in thinking about will. Should we have crossed the she would not have cross. Just wasn't part of this cultural context. The catholic church was very small and america. That time with interesting is to cross becomes a universal christian symbol in america in the eighteen fifties through the eighteen seventies and you even have written documents talking about how the symbol of the cross is unifying christians together but meanwhile the church of jesus christ of latter day saints in utah and is not participating in this near universal adoption of the cross. So some of these kinds of ideas that to us sound like oh yeah. This sounds really interesting like. Would you wear a dagger around your neck. These are not new ideas. They've been around for centuries and they were actually anti catholic rhetoric that protestants were saying in the eighteen hundreds and even earlier. Yeah and that's really helpful just to see how these cultural developments are horror. The the narrative of culture to sometimes forms what we think is doctrine or highlights Certain beliefs that weren't highlighted before for whatever reason in that can sometimes mold how we how we approached the doctrinal work or teach it to others which may be isn't helpful in the end and a lot to just goes back to how one views the symbol of the cross. My colleague eric. Huntsman tells a story where he was talking with the presbyterian friend in says will we focus on the living christ and she was completely finished. He was like well. I believe in the living. Christ look at the cross. I'm wearing it's empty. I'm focused on jesus lips. He's not on the cross anymore now. There's a difference of course between across in a crucifix. A crucifix being a symbol of across with christ on it. But if we were to talk to perhaps a catholic who's wearing a crucifix see. i'm worshiping the dead. Christ they would say for me. This is an image of love. this is showing me. Jesus loved me so much. This is what he was willing to do for me. And so when we can see the beauty in other

people how they might view assemble that can open doors of conversation and you know what there's lots of opportunities that could be right. Double check that. I believe in twelve different states in the united states and in several countries around the world. Good friday is either a national or a state holiday. What a great opportunity to do. An interfaith service to join forces with a local catholic church or another organization to say. Could we get together and celebrate our joint appreciation for what jesus christ did for us on the cross. There's lots of opportunities for bridge building. Here yeah so. Talk to me in a in the context of our our faith traditions. You mentioned other traditions. Have maybe more focus on good friday in these things but as a leader. Maybe bishop running a award or relief site president. You know what are some things that we can do to emphasize again. Not the symbol of of the cross the events that took place on the cross and why that is so important. Well i think what one possibility is for us to teach directly from the scriptures about the crucifixion. In some of the lessons that they have for example. And i've actually done this with different classes. That i've taught if i say ask a question like what would you say is the purpose of christ's atonement. The most often given answer is to atone for our sense and that's one hundred percent true incorrect. The scriptures also give multiple additional reasons for christ's crucifixion for example in john chapter twelve. Jesus says that. When i lifted up from the cross i will draw all people to me and then he says now the prince of this world shall be cast out in other words. Jesus is saying on the cross. I'm going to get a victory over the devil. And the apostle paul uses that exact same phraseology. He talks about the triumph of the cross. And so if we were to. Maybe i'm just kind of imagine myself as an elders corn president and i'm talking with a member who's very scared or concern about some problems that he's facing and maybe things are looking really bad financially for him right now.

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If we can understand the triumph of the cross. Jesus won the victory. Maybe that's a way for me to how this member friend. How some hope imagine. I might say to them. Imagine that you're watching a sporting event. You really care about the outcome. Your team is behind your super stressed. What if you had an absolute guarantee that no matter. How are the engine was no matter. How many injuries they had your team would win. You obviously relaxed right. I could enjoy the game. More and the punchline is jesus wins hall says he triumphed on the cross. Jesus says that himself in so whatever difficulties or challenges we have. I think we can have faith and confidence knowing that. He's victoria's so. I wanna make sure we have plenty of time to dive into some of these leadership concepts in the context of the cross. The crucifixion christ's suffering there when it comes to repentance whether that's in the context of particular sacramento just repenting every day. Like how can a leader better rely on the events on calvary to better help an individual repent. So here's what it. Let's imagine that we're we're talking to someone who's feeling really discouraged like i'm worthless. Look at all these terrible things done. There's no way that god is going to love me still or reach out to me or maybe one of the first places that we might want to turn is. Romans chapter five and because a lot of the people that we're gonna be talking to won't have been reading. Romans chapter five recently. But let's take him to romans chapter five verse but god commend his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us. So paul ties. Christ didn't wait till you were perfect today for

you. He died for you. While you were a senator in. That is how god is sending his love to you or we might take them to doctrine and covenants section. eighteen verse. Tennis really famous. Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of god but notice the very next phrase for behold the larger redeemer suffered death in the flesh. That's the proof of your worth is great and i think connecting those two clauses really important. There were great instead of god. Why what's the proof. Look see the larger. Redeemer suffered death in the flesh. Can you see how much value you have to jesus. I think when we can kind of understand that jesus did not give up on us on the cross. He didn't quit and give semi. he's not giving up honest now today. That can be a message of hope and encouragement to someone who feels like it's too late for me. I'm off awards team. Yeah and that's what. I love so much about as i was reading your reading. The book and i shared a little bit of on instagram. Just the epiphany. I had and it's one of those epiphanies. I've known all along but just reading in this context so helpful because as a bishop i remember those moments of like high some trying to repair twelve. Let's make sure that they know that that's really bad. What they did. And so k. I lectured on that for about ten minutes. Let's maybe get some internet filters or let's focus on the behaviors. And how can you not do that again. Right and i mean i don't wanna shame but still this has heavy stuff we have to really focus on and it sorta becomes this this emphasis on behaviors and we know we know that i've gotten the atomic to the side here. What we're going to use that in just a minute here. But let's make sure that you know but as i went through this and i feel like the greatest power with the crucifixion is like if we had a way to put an individual in a time machine and take them back to that day when christ was crucified. And just the symbolism of those people who were there at the foot of the cross and the connection they felt to the by literally witnessing him for them and and if we can grab someone by the hand and help them through just sitting with that suffering that death and making space for it. There's as i've gone there. There's nothing. I want more than to change to do better like i don't some lecture on what's good or bad or what i should do less. I just wanna do more good. And that's where i appreciate it so much about the way you took from the history. The narratives what was going on how it happened was so powerful in helping an individual. Sit with crucifixion. Look at it consider and realize that was for me. Then i wanna change yeah. I think you're exactly right that it goes back to what president folsom said that as we understand increasing our understanding of any aspect of the savior's atonement will draw closer to him so one of the best things that we can do is is help those that were working with understand the saviors told better and since many won't have studied her focused on the cross that may be some some great opportunities for them to really understand what the savior is doing. And as you're going to those scriptures. I don't know if you mentioned this one.

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But in the book but one of my favorite scriptures in in relation to the redemptive power of christ's death in the crucifixion as romans. Six five and six says four if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall also in the likeness of his resurrection knowing this that our old man is crucified with him. That the body of sin might be destroyed the henceforth we should not serve sin. I just love that visual of like every sunday. We're like dragon. Our old man are old self into sacra remaining. Be like all right. I got another one that needs to be on that cross. I

gotta get rid of this old man. i wanna be new again through christ. Yeah that's perfect. That's a powerful visualization. I love that. Yeah anything else. In the in the context of the crucifixion the cross helping individual through the repentance process. That may be mentioned it. So here's here's one. That is one of those lessons. That's actually not. It's what's not said in the scriptures. That i think speaks more loudly than what is so we know. The general storyline in mark chapter fourteen. Peter denies jesus three times and then he goes out and he weeps bitterly. That imagine that we're reading or hearing the gospel of mark for the first time we're looking to see what happens to peter in chapter fifteen at the crucifixion. Npr is never mentioned so by the time we get to resurrection morning. Maybe us as a reader were thinking about. Pierce gone you know. He denied christ web bitterly and walked right out of town. He's off he's outta here but in chapter sixteen verse seven the young man at the tomb specifically says to the women. There go your way. Tell us disciples and heater. That jesus goes before you to galilee. And i love how peter is specifically called out to say. You're still on the team. We might have k. We know that peter is going to make a comeback. We know about the book back so we might just kind of miss that message. But i think that's really helpful message to share. Peter has made some mistakes and we often will say. Well maybe jesus commanded peter to deny him and while that's possible if we look at the original text. It doesn't seem likely what seems likely. Is that. Peter really is faced with peer pressure any stumbles and however you re i mean you can read it both ways but i kind of like that ladder with because sometimes i stumble and it's nice to be able to see that i've got a friend in peter. He stumbles but he makes a comeback. And i think that's another message of hope that we can give. Yeah that's that's powerful and even the one that hit my heart directly was the. I don't think this is a a parallel that you came up with that. You shared a few quotes as far as the concept of barabbas in this this Individual who who was released so that the savior could be crucified and just to put yourself in his shoes to realize. Wow like i was about to be crucified. Like it was over for me. And now i'm going home to my family and t to witness the saviour being taken away by the crowd or the soldiers and saying what he did that for me. And i'm i going to go home now like that to me is just so Redemptive in the context of repentance of like the sting of obscene will never reach me because he took it all so encouraging you know one more to the chemistry minds thinking of people like barabbas who are criminals crisis crucified between two criminals and one of the statements that he made on the cross really stands out to. You've got learned the criminals. Who's kind of yelling at christ and saying. Hey if you're really the savior save us and the other says. Don't you fear god because we've justly been condemned but this man's done nothing wrong. And then he says. Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom and jesus responses barely i san to you today you will be with me in paradise now when i was growing up anytime i heard her this i think i only heard it with like a big asterik next to it and then the whole conversation was about. I remember you have to be baptized to go to heaven. There's no such thing as death bed repentance. Would jesus really saying is you'll go to spirit prison. And maybe if you're lucky you can hear about the gospel there but first of all. We don't know whether or not the had ever been baptized. Second of all. Look at what he says. Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom. Doesn't that kind of sound like alma. The younger another personal was on a bad path and he said jesus son of god have mercy on me and jesus did have mercy on him. In fact joseph smith he gives a specific quote about this passage that i had never heard growing up and he makes it clear that the thief isn't automatically going to be exalted but he kind of

rephrase the savior statement to be. Today i will be with you in paradise and then i will teach you all these things so the way that joe smith is saying i will personally teach you and we might say will but doesn't Jesus organize the righteous and they do all the teaching and i'm sure that's for the most part but Joe Smith said maybe Jesus personally does teach one or two people and i for one thing it.

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It would be an amazing painting. If there's any painters listening today to see a painting of Jesus and the thief on the cross together in the spirit world and to me what. This is where i used to kind of here to think about it as a message about like well you gotta get baptized. There's no death bed repentance. Long the saviors grace and mercy and love. It's extended to everyone and this man. Who's is that a bitter moment. He's reaching out to Jesus and Jesus is reaching back. That's awesome in. I hope that somebody wrote those. Those teachings down will get this additional book of scriptures when we get to the other side that that's awesome and again before i move on here i just want 'cause i remember being that bishop who just like okay. This is the first time. I met with this guy or gal. And i don't know what else to say a keep messing up and but again your job is to like help convince them that. The grace of Jesus Christ even reaches them like reached the thief on the cross with him like it can reach you and we can do this as many times as you want. I'm here to instill hope in create space of while. Look what Christ did for you. Isn't that great. And you're gonna probably come back in a week and you mess up again and we're going to have the same conversation because the toll is so good like crisis good and reaches all of us and then they walk out with hope rather than okay. I need to get my three steps. Needed tech some every night. I need to do this. Like the installation of hope that you give such great examples of scriptures you can read stories you can tell you know parallels you can draw the just instill hope in that repentance process because repented should be about hope and maybe some of this is helpful for the relief. Society president or the bishop. Who's working with someone who's kind of struggling over and over again in your it can get exhausting. Amanda we need to go meet again. Like i got my own family to take care of her. Whatever the situation might be We can. I think be personally strengthen as we see what Christ is doing and no one's appreciating it right you don't see in with the cross being like Lord bless you. Thank you for what you're doing. You're the greatest Lord. I mean people are mocking him. They're torturing him he's completely abandoned. I mean i guess for me. then. If i'm feeling frustrated in my ministry like wow this is hard people. Don't really appreciate what i'm doing. I just have to look to the cross of Christ to realize. Oh okay. i might even close to following in his footsteps. I can. I can keep on going. Yeah and that's where. I wanted to pivot to next far as helping people with challenging circumstances i remember when percents particular At the mother who her nine year old son who passed away suddenly in. I'm the bishop go over there. It's like like there's so much. I'm supposed to say these things. Come Friday to say but thankfully i was. I was actually reading Brad Wilcox's book the continues to Thome and she looked at me and she said it might be punished. Like why is this happening. And the words of Brad Wilcox came to my mind. And i said you're not being punished. You're being sanctified and like okay that work that landed good cause but in those circumstances where it's just like i don't know

what to say. I don't know how to do this. So how do we turn towards calvary and the doctrines there to help comfort people or helping through difficult circumstances anything that yemen said about. I mean there's a really beautiful. There's a really beautiful way of looking at that. Elder wirthlin described his talks. Sunday will come. And there's no magic words that you can use it anytime but one thing that i think is helpful as tried to a race. Everything that you know about christ's death and resurrection and just sit there with mary. Magdalene or married the mother of jesus or nicodemo sit there at the crucifixion scene. Watch your savior and as far as you know. This is it. it's over. We have two thousand years of history of the resurrection. So we're like of course resurrected like stay tuned forty-eight hours from now but they didn't they seem to be unaware of the saying and what all of christ's teachings had met so christ is buried and when i'm teaching you're focusing on this. I almost always jump straight from the burial to the resurrection. Let's sit in saturday. If crisis crucified on friday representing. Maybe the tragedies of our life and he's resurrected on sunday representing the miracles racks recovery or being able to look back and see how even though it was hard we were able to make through in the middle of saturday. And i think we spent a lot of our lives and saturday in the middle between yesterday's tragedy and tomorrow's triumph. But just seeing what those early disciples did when they were in the middle on saturday.

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They stayed close to jesus and we know that because they're they're resurrection morning. They didn't they didn't leave town which might have been a reasonable thing to do. Considering the fact that the romans had just killed their master ride their leader. And so who are. They gonna come for next. This is a scary time. But even the missile difficulty. They stayed close to jesus. And i think some form of what we've just been talking about could be helpful to share with someone who's in the middle of a difficult time. And what elder wirthlin said was an paraphrasing. A little bit here. He said we're all going to have our shattering fridays where everything is so discouraging but sunday will come. In knowing that sunday came for these early disciples and it will come for us. I think can be a message of hope when we're stuck in the middle. yeah how. that's such a powerful concept because again putting ourselves in that in the presence of that moment where they didn't fully understand you know it's like they wait around like any minute you have. He's going to walk out of that to him here. We go right. They didn't fully understand that in many questioning. Though i thought i was supposed to over you know overtake the government. And be you know take down the romans and now he's gone like really. There wasn't a clear ending to the story that that restored hope but it came and actually just paraphrased from chapter twenty four the soobee another great story to share so the two disciples who are on the road to amaze they see a stranger. It's really jesus. But we don't recognize him. And jesus says what's are what are you guys to. And they're like what are you talking about. Do not even know what's going on. And he's like well. What do you mean what's going on today. Explain you about the crucifixion. We're looking this phrase the again and you just kind of paraphrased. It's luke chapter twenty four. I one but we trusted. Notice the past tense. We had hoped that he was the one we trusted. But i guess we were wrong. And i think it's pretty powerful to see that in the very moment they were losing hope. Jesus was walking

with them. I think that's a powerful passage that we can share with those who are losing up to say just like they thought it was over. Jesus was with them even in that moment in Jesus and how many fathers are with you. You've been in your difficult times and again. I looked at creating space in sitting with them on Saturday or when before the resurrection. It's easy to jump towards the resurrection. Say yeah but look I mean. He overcame don't you feel better now but just like sitting there just like Christ could have walked up and said hey guys. I'm here like I'm resurrected. But instead he's like no. I'm going to some questions and they're not gonna realize it's me but will help them sit with the reality of the hopelessness which brings greater redemptive power to the event of the resurrection. Awesome awesome Side note here. I just wanna pivot towards real quick. Is it's difficult at times to deal with the crucifixion. Because it is so gory right like we are not the type of people lineup for the gory movies at the movie theater. Like I wanna look away. I don't wanna consider it like the gas seminary so ambiguous that I can sort of be there like. I don't know what happened. Bleed from every pore I. Let's be there but when we go to Calvary it's just hard to be there mentally. You're spiritually so. How would you respond to that. As far as the it's hard to consider these doctrines when they include such gory nature. So that I think this is a really interesting question and my theory is that it's sort of an individual approach. Maybe some of us have a reticence to view those kinds of images and within project that onto everybody else. But I think there are certain there sometimes and maybe for some people were. It's actually very helpful to think about a graphic image of a crucified. Christ just a couple of examples. Elder do Bay of the Seventy describes what he calls one of the spiritually defining moments of his life. He was ten years old in his native country of Zimbabwe at a Catholic church. And he's just walking looking at all the paintings Christ did different things and then he looks up. He sees the picture of Christ being crucified and he said tears came to his eyes and he thought hey he really went through a lot just for me now some of us might say we shouldn't show pictures of a crucifixion to children. Because that's gonna scar them and certainly there. There might be some pictures that are too graphic and there might be some age of children where you kind of think carefully about what we're doing but here I. could do a ten year old is having one of the furiously defining moments of his life as he sees the image of the crucified. Savior another to me. Really powerful example that a share in the book has to do with the woman who experienced some severe trauma in her life and she doesn't go into the details of whether it was abuse or what it was but it was clearly beyond just a mild bad day and she talks about how she knew in her mind that Jesus suffered for her but it was wind.

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She mentally concede a true image of the crucified. Christ and she talks about how like usually are pictures of Christ being crucified are. Pg crisis may be frowning you know tiny bit of blood but the reality of the image would have been much more bloody Christ screaming out in agony in although that's an image that I don't think we seek out. Generally when she saw that image she connected with Jesus in a new a real way and she said all said. I realized that Jesus understands me. Maybe one more example. I'm not trying to be insensitive to listeners. Who you know may may have tender feelings and not want to think about these kinds of things but Corrie ten Boom. Many people probably read her book the hiding place. She was a Christian who is helping Jews

during world war two and eventually she found out and she sent to a concentration camp and she and her sister endured all sorts of horrible abuses including once a week they and all the other women in their building would have to take off all their clothes and be inspected by the guards and she talks about. How humiliating and degrading. This was but one day. The thought comes to her mind. They took away Jesus as close as well. He was crucified naked. And just parenthetically. There is actually historical evidence that many people at least were crucified naked. We don't know specifically whether Jesus was wearing a loincloth through. But it's a possibility so this idea comes to remind. He was naked when they crucified him. And all of a sudden she didn't feel shame. In this difficult circumstances there was some solidarity that she felt with. Jesus Christ so again. I'm not recommending that we try to push gory details on everyone but I think we should acknowledge that for people who have experienced extreme pain it may be helpful so recognize that Jesus has experienced extreme pain. And maybe you. I can't relate to them. But Jesus can you said a great a buzzword. We have leading saints that solidarity. We did a whole episode about the concept of solidarity in the power of it and really that is why the atonement crucifixion fring. So powerful is it takes us to place of solidarity with him. I remember being missionary. Just horribly homesick. Like trying to get used to mission life in getting letters from my sister who is also a Fuse earlier had also been a very homesick missionary. And just the way she articulated. It's like she was reading my mind Mike she gets. She's been here. She understands me and it got got me through the day like it. It gave me power to move forward right and so when we get there with the savior. It's so powerful. In as a leader you may go into somebody visit sola stage four cancer. And you're like yeah you know. I had a cousin wants to had the same cancer in so I got an idea. It must be pretty tough. And they're like what are you talking about. You know what this is light we. We almost try and force a connection right but instead when they can sit with the atonement and and the detail you go into where you know. Even were how they nailed feet to. The cross was just so like it was graphic. But it's sort of like. Wow that would really really hurt in again it takes me to a place from just like wow and again he did it for me like he lost understand me. So I'm just thinking of people who may be going through a very physical trial whether it's cancer or surgeries or whatever and saying like you should really study these things in and see if he can find a connection there with the savior because he experienced severe physical pain as well that of course it's still hard. It's hard for the you'll it's hard as the leader. The there's no magic bullet to make these conversations easy. But I think that they do find a home in power in the savior's atonement. Let's talk about as far as preparing individuals for ordinances. whether it's an endowment or the sealing ordinance is there anything we can draw upon from the of the crucifixion in the suffering. That happened there. To maybe helping individual move forward with these these ordinances so that the endowment itself clearly the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is central to the savior's endowment are sued me. The crucifixion is central to the temple. Endowment right there are lots of ways that we can see that one. I think kind of that in the room you have. The altar of the temple and the altar is clearly a symbol of death and we see in the book of Jacob that Abraham sacrificing are almost sacrificing his son Isaac on the altar was a symbol the death of Christ we see that also in the book of Moses and Eve built in all alternate offers. Sacrifice that this thing was in similitude of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ so just the visual place alter the endowment room is a reminder.

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I think that maybe as as a church leader one great opportunity that we have is to talk to those who are preparing to be sealed in the temple especially if they've already been endowed encina sealing ordinance we can kind of talk them through some additional symbolism and again it might be more meaningful for those who have been doubt and seeing the ceiling seventy but if you can visualize ceiling room in the center of a ceiling room is an altar again a symbol of the death of jesus christ and elder bruce haven talked about performing sealing ordinance and he said he invited the husband and wife to the altar to join hands at the altar of the temple. And whether you think about the altar or the hands that are classed together on the altar. The crucifixion of jesus christ is literally at the center of a ceiling covenant. And i think if we could share that. I have shared this with people who are preparing to be sealed in the temple. It can be powerful moment. I've seen is just kind of widen a little bit in this awhile like so christ in a sense census crucified with my marriage. Yeah you and your husband. Together we could say in a sense that christ is nailing you to his cross and to me. I think this opens up the door for a completely different kind of love in marriage. Jesus on the cross. He wasn't looking at the people in saying like. Oh you're so attractive to me like i'm in love with you. Know he's looking at people who are ridiculing hand. Who are treating him terribly. But he's still dying to make them holy and i'm not in. This thought suggesting that anyone should remain in an abusive relationship or that. We should tolerate abuse. I do think though that sometimes when we have little friction points so someone who's about to get in the temple may find out sometime in the next year or reek of their marriage that their spouses perfect as they thought and there's irritation come up in rather than get mad and quit. We can say away. I'm gonna love my spouse with the same kind of love. Jesus manifest for me on the cross because his crucifixion is a key part of my marriage. Covenant that's an opportunity think whereas the crucifixion becomes more meaningful to me than my marriage covenants become more meaningful because i see the connection within them. Yeah now i love that so much. Know again that the concept of the sanctification in suffering right and sometimes that suffering is in our own life that trials experienced we we suffer in that turns towards god in christ and we find saint vacation there but the cross of christ suffering there it like infused ordinances with that power of sanctification to help us reach a higher level right to live up to all the words we hear during that that sealing ordinance in the power in that and so by focusing their it's easy to sort of again dismissed. The you know you've been to a ceiling orleans external. It's going to happen and you know we encourage you to love each other and do the dishes every once Those that's great advice but to really bring out the crucifixion in that ordinances is powerfully sanctifying. Now and it connects with what paul's marriage device was inefficient chapter five husbands. Love your wives. Even as christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. Says we see how it is that crisis giving himself or the church what that entails that then as a model for how spouses are to love each other yeah awesome. Let's wrap up as far as focusing on just bringing christ's crucifixion into our personal worship and devotion because at the end of the book you list off of is and thoughts of maybe doing this. And so what what advice i mean. If someone's listening thinking okay. I want to especially during the easter season. i want to really infuse my life with the crucifixion. The power that came through that sacrifice would advice. Would you give him so. There's lots of

things that we can do one piece advice. We talked earlier about good friday. Good friday is the friday before easter. And that's probably an opportune. That many of us have to turn our thoughts to the saviours atoning sacrifice and there are lots of ways that we could do that. Not everyone has the luxury of being able to take a day off of work but we might be able to get up a little bit earlier or have an evening devotional where we reflect part. I think is just taking time to read these scriptural accounts. More carefully. I've created a little handout. We can linked to this on the show notes or within the podcast. Where i've got matthew mark luke and john's accounts of the crucifixion side by side. So you can kind of carefully read and see the similarities and differences in what they say it. While the general storyline is similar there are some differences in and sometimes seeing those differences really can make something pop out. Here's just one really small example.

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But as jesus christ carrying his cross and then he needs help from simon luke notes that simon carries the cross while following. Jesus so jesus in the lead and simon carrying the cross is behind and if you notice that little detail that simon is following. Jesus it may remind you that earlier. In luke jesus had talked about people taking up their cross and following him so by reading carefully. I see this new detail. Okay i've got across and i'm carrying it but it might carrying my cross while following. Jesus or am. I carry my cross with bitterness and anger and not following jesus and so there are dozens of rich insights that we could have just by taking the time to carefully read these chapters. Maybe sometimes we've kinda rushed past in our effort to get to the resurrection. Younes fired me to do several things. You talked about looking for a replica of the crown of thorns. Right lou. sure enough on amazon. John bought it and i even found replica. A crucifixion nells right. And so i'd like this approach. Where i want my kids. You know my six year old. I wanna i wanna hold the nails. I want them to see how you know. How the thorn of crowns looked might have felt than in some of these things in in that really brings it to the forefront of their mind right. it's rather than out scripture time. I don't even know what dad is saying. What the scriptures. But while i'm holding something and you know. I can see christ in this in and even went as far as finding a good friday service. That's happening in my local area here and emmy. That's something i can engage in and with my community so yeah so many ideas. Maybe one other that i'll mention is lately. I've noticed a lot of people are really excited about the series the chosen maybe introducing a lot of members of the church of jesus christ of latter day saints to a whole genre of film that we haven't been aware of. There's lots of movies about. Jesus christ that aren't produced by the church One of my favorites is the gospel of john. Another one is called the son of god and so i think this easter season is a great time to select a movie about jesus. Christ that we maybe we haven't seen before and maybe on palm sunday the sunday before easter. Or maybe on good friday or somewhere between would take some time to watch a movie about jesus. I'm not saying that you know movies are the answer to everything. But there is something powerful about Kind of we can read the story but as we see the story that also can have a powerful influence in our minds and hearts anything else. We're missing concept for point. John that You wanna make sure we we before we wrap up. Well i just wanted to me. The most important thing is. We realized that. Jesus truly did this. What we're

talking about is not fictional. He really died for you and me because he loves us. And the deavere that truth is embedded in our hearts. I think them the greater ability. We then have to extend live in mercy and grace toddlers and feel it for ourselves. I got one more question for you but where any obviously can get online or desert book anywhere. You'd send them if they want more information about the book or even just about you. So i do have a website. John hilton is dot com slash crucifixion. And if you were to go to that page. I have lots of articles that are available for free links to different videos. So there's there's lots of resources on that age. You don't need to buy the book you can go to that page and fine. I think a host of details if there's something that we talked about earlier for example there's more than fifty versus that talk about christ's crucifixion. I've linked to an article that describes in detail all of those or if you're curious to know more about what joseph smith taught about. Christ crucifixion facility. There's a link to an article about that just a host of information there. If you're interested. Yeah i never wanna come across as being too prescriptive in some of these sacred practices responsibilities that leaders have and not being helped Bishop helping individual through repentant but again. I've been that bishop just sort of not sure what say next or how to handle the situation. A book like this could be such a powerful tool to give some say. Hey why don't you read this unless you talk about it. Let's meet a few more times. Maybe you know cross reference scriptures and ensuing finding in that really gives again allowed you to create space for the crucifixion that come in and he'll through the power that that suffering that savior did for for all of us so again. Don't wanna be too prescriptive. Bishop should have a library of various books. And i had this big. Everyone have their so john. The last question i have for you is just what. What final encouragement would you give to leaders as they are leading people in you know in the context of fiction any final encouragement advice. You give to them now. One source that we can draw strength from is the final seven words that jesus said on the cross and so if we look at matthew mark christ makes one statement from the cross in luke.

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He makes three statements in john. He makes three statements that none of them are the same except the matthew marks. There's a total of seven statements. And i'll just mention two in passing. But i think that when we look to jesus is the ultimate leader that we can find some strength and jews that phrase again solidarity with him as we think about what he experienced. So one of the phrases in this is the only phrase in matthew and mark. Jesus says my god. My god why have you forsaken me. And i think it's important for us to realize that jesus salt abandoned and totally alone you are going to feel about. Sometimes those who serve are gonna feel that at times and jesus felted and evacuated matthew and mark. That's where the book ends when we watch a movie. That's almost never the final word from the cross gazelle. Draw from luke or john as well ending on a hope flirt triumphant note. But for me i think kind of like we talked about sitting in saturday. It's okay to sit for a moment in the abandonment. The last word in matthew and mark that christ feels and experiences. That's one example. Another is the final word that jesus says in luke he says father into your hands. I commend my spirit. And i think it's interesting that that last word he says hers last statement begins with the word father father into hands. I commend my spirit. In if we go back to the very first thing. Jesus says in

luke. It's if you remember. He's twelve years. Old is in the temple and his parents. Like what are you doing. And he says. Didn't you know that. I must be about my father's business. So from the beginning to the end his first words to his last jesus showing us a focus on his father. I think ultimately that's our responsibility as leaders. We're trying our very best to do. The will of the father. It's gonna be hard. We're going to make mistakes. But as we keep trying we can kinda have that in the forefront of our minds. We're not our own agents trying to do our own thing we're trying to do our father's business and as we do he will help us. That concludes my interview with professor. John hilton i hope that was an uplifting lifting episode for you as it was for me really appreciate john's effort of focusing on these doctrines and articulating the way that is so enriching again. I encourage you to go check this book out. It is not just an easter book. It's an everyday book because the crucifixion is an everyday sacrifice for all of us again. It's considering the cross by john hilton and remember. If you know someone who'd be a great fit for the how i lead segment could leading saints dot org slash contact and submit your suggestion. It came as a result of the position of leadership which was imposed upon us. I the god of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of jesus christ the declaration was made concerning 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 to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.