



Developing Wilford Woodruff as a Leader | An Interview with Steven Wheelwright

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Speaker 1 00:00:02 How's your teaching calling going? Have you ever asked a question during the second hour? And suddenly everyone is looking at the carpet in silence? There are proven methods to stimulate class discussion that work like a charm. David Farnsworth does a masterful job presenting on this very subject in the Teaching Saints Virtual Library. What questions? Get people talking. How can you effectively listen to the answer they're saying without being distracted of where you wanna take the class Next? These are crucial principles to consider, especially in this time of Come Follow Me Sunday School. You can watch David Farnsworth presentation by visiting leading-saints.org/fourteen. There you can gain free access for 14 days to the Teaching Saints Virtual Library, where you'll find hours and hours of content to help you be a better prepared Sunday teacher.

Speaker 1 00:00:53 If you wanted further insight into a come Follow Me lesson, you'd probably search in YouTube or get the We Believe app, tough church history questions. You'd reach out to the BH Roberts Foundation. But what if you wanted to learn to be a better leader? Well, I'm glad you asked. You'd come to Leading Saints. That's why we exist to help Latter Day Saints be better prepared to lead by being familiar with others' leadership experiences. Understand the latest leadership research, and finding a community to share ideas. That's why I'm glad you found the Leading Saints podcast. We hope you will dive into the archives and visit leading-saints.org to find out what are the top most listened to episodes on the podcast. Welcome. You're gonna love it.

Speaker 1 00:01:45 Welcome back to another episode of the Leading Saints Podcast and today, and welcome you in Steve Wheelwright. How are you? Terrific. How are you? Good. Now,

many people may not realize we'll need a link to this, but we've done an interview before, but just not this podcast. Right? Right. <laugh>, we talked, uh, that was for the latter day Saint BA podcast. Right. We talked about your time as, uh, your president of BYU Hawaii for many years, and you're at Harvard and I mean just your business career and all things. And so we'll link to that. Yeah. If people really wanna dig in there. So, but we're, we're back. But not to talk about you for the most part. That's right. Thank goodness. <laugh>. Nice. Now you are, what's your role with the Wilford Woodruff Papers? I'm an advisor. Okay. And I'm involved in the fundraising side.

Speaker 1 00:02:27 Nice. I basically an ex-officio member of the board <laugh>. Okay. All right. Now, I think many, probably most Latter Day Saints are familiar with Joseph Smith papers that, you know, they've been going so long, just concluded that effort. So what are the Wilford Woodruff papers? So, Wilford Woodruff wrote 10 times what Joseph Smith ever wrote. In fact, Joseph Smith didn't write much. He often had a scribe or somebody who would record Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But about 30% of the Joseph Smith papers are what Wilford Woodruff wrote down because he was there. Wow. And he kept better notes than anybody else. So from the day he was baptized in 1833 until he died in 1898 as the president of the church, he kept a journal. And that journal is the best record of the Pioneer Restoration. All the things that went on the temple work, everything else that was developed from the time of Joseph Smith from 1833 onward.

Speaker 1 00:03:26 Yeah. And, you know, just by, uh, you know, not that I've done a deep dive on Wilford Woodruff, but I've read the Saints volumes and I think it's Follow Two of Saints that really gets into his administration. Correct. And some of his life. Then I just now, the, the one about Temple doctrine. Yeah. So Wilford Woodruff's witness the development of Temple Doctrine. That's right. Yeah. This is a book by Jennifer Mackley, who is heading up the Wilford Woodruff Papers Project, and she is the expert on Wilford Woodruff, everything you wrote Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> everything that's still available where it is. And she wrote that book based on Wilford Woodruff's record of having been the first real temple president. So he was the Temple President of St. George while he was president of the Quorum of the 12, I think. Was that the, the first president of St.

Speaker 1 00:04:12 George? He was the first president, yeah. Okay. So it opened in, I think it was January of 1877. And he was there until he became basically the prophet. Yeah. Yeah. And, and just like looking at his life and learning more, you know, I go back to the decision of, of ending polygamy, just like that was such a lose lose situation. Yeah. And as far as like leadership goes, like what an example of leadership. He had to really look at some hard facts, obviously seek out direction and revelation, whatnot. But to make that decision, I mean, he had the government against him and a lot of the membership of the church to really move out and, and make that decision. And, and both sides were not happy with it, but he was do it. Yeah. Turns out that he was really prepared to do that. I mean, he'd been there from before it started to when it got underway.

Speaker 1 00:04:59 Yeah. He then had additional wives besides Phoebe, his first wife, and then he was the one that ended it. Yeah. It's fascinating. So anytime there's an opportunity to

discuss Wilford Woodruff, now I've have such a soft spot in my leadership heart for Wilford Woodruff, because from the moment he was baptized, I mean, the guy just didn't stop, you know, he was being sent on missions. He was, you know, called his apostle then in Temple ies then leading he in the church historian officially Wow. For several years. But his record is the record that people refer to during Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> 1833 to 1898. Yeah. 'cause that's where he never missed a thing. Yeah. In fact, when, when Brigham Young was picking the site for the Salt Lake temple, he takes a few of the apostles with him. And of course, the only person that brought a stake and a hammer to hammer it in with was Wilford <laugh> always prepared.

Speaker 1 00:05:53 Yeah. And he, he gets there and he says, this is where it's gonna be. And he turns to Wilfred, he said, Wilfred, mark this, will you <laugh>? Of course he knew Wilfred was ready to mark it. Yeah. Because that's what Wilfred did. Yeah. And he really, I mean, that apprentice to Brigham Young in so many ways, and by the time and just reading the book, like it was sort of a like President Kimball situation where John Taylor was younger than Wilford Woodruff and Right. I think he assumed that John Taylor would outlive him. Yeah. Yeah. And here he is didn't happen as a prophet for many years. Yeah. And, and the influence on Temple doctrine and all those things, so like going back to the Wilford Woodruff papers, like now this isn't like a, this is a independent organization apart from the church. Right, right. Except how does that work?

Speaker 1 00:06:39 The church is clearly, well, the church did the Joseph Smith papers because it was Joseph Smith. Right. And they decided to publish hard copies, which means you better have everything exactly right before you do it. Yeah. Can take some resources because you can't go back. And they ended up having a single major donor who paid for most of that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, they decided on the other prophets that we should let groups of latter-Day Saints do this, because everybody should be anxiously engaged anyway. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But the church we assume will eventually take over all of this, but we're only publishing on website, on the website that we have. Gotcha. So we've published 25,000 pages already, you know, but we've got another, probably 12,000 ago. But we're also publishing all the names mentioned in his record, all of the places mentioned in his record, all of, so that the subjects were indexing everything so that they're searchable.

Speaker 1 00:07:41 So yeah, it's gonna be, yeah. If you wanna know what went on in the church between 1833 and 1898, go look at Wilford Woodruff's, the papers. He's a man. He's the guy. And so the, the general effort is to organize all that he's written into a way that obviously we can learn from, and then it can be easily researched further for different projects. Right. Yeah. So one thing I learned recently that I hadn't heard before was he gave about 4,000 discourses, but he never wrote those down. Hmm. Now he would write in his journal, oh, this was one of my best ones. <laugh> lasted 22 minutes, and then he'd tell who spoke before him or after him, and how long they spoke. Wow. And he'd talk about what they said, but he didn't talk about what he said, because he never wrote out his discourses.

Speaker 1 00:08:29 Interesting. Just stood at the lectern and went, huh. He, he believed that he should only preach by the spirit. Wow. So he didn't write 'em down. Yeah. And then nobody had a tape recorder back then. Yeah. So, so one of the things that the Wilford Woodruff papers

is doing is going back to stake conference records. I mean, all sorts of records. General conference, the general conference ones. People took pretty good notes and they'd kind of triangulate. So they'd have multiple people take notes and, but yeah, that's all part of the project. Yeah. It's great. That's, that's fun. And, uh, just a side, you know, factoid here that, uh, Wilford Woodruff is the first modern day prophet to record his voice on a recorder of some type. And he testified of the prophet Joseph Smith. You can find it on, on YouTube. I've, yeah. I've listened to it.

Speaker 1 00:09:13 It's awesome. Yeah. Great. It's really cool. So do you have a personal connection with Wilford Woodruff? I don't. Other than you. He's that belief. He was a prophet. I know he was a prophet <laugh>. That's right. That's right. Cool. I've read a lot of his stuff now. That's great. So, and this we can pivot into sort of the crux of our conversation today. Just the, I'd love learning about the life of leaders to see how, you know, with hindsight, we can look back and really see how the Lord was shepherding them along and developing them into the, the character they needed to be in order to be a prophet, you know? Yeah. Yeah. And, uh, you've done some presentation research about his, his missions, the many, many missions Yeah. That he did. Where's a good jumping off point? Well, I actually think, I wish there were two other books that had been written, and hopefully they'll get written.

Speaker 1 00:09:56 The one on Temple doctrine is terrific. Yeah. Because he recorded, you know, when did we get white clothing? When did we get this? When did we get that? All those things are in there, but he also missionary work. There was no better missionary than Wilford Woodruff. Yeah. And he'd go wherever he was called and he'd speak up and everything else. That's, and we'll talk about that in just a minute. The third one though, is polygamy. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, because he was there before, during, and after. And his record is a far better record, I think, of what was it like, why did things change? How did they change, how did the Lord intervene to protect the church, to protect the people and all of that. So, but let's talk about the missionary work. Yeah, let's do it. He was looking, he didn't join the church until he was 26, and it was December 31st, 1833 that he joined the church.

Speaker 1 00:10:50 And he had been looking for truth. And so I remember the old seminary video about Yeah. About Wilford Woodruff. He was looking for prophets and apostles, right? Yeah, yeah. <laugh>. And when he didn't find him in any of the churches, he, he just concluded that can't be the true church. And so Elder Pulsifer was the missionary. There were two missionaries who came. They hadn't traveled that far. In fact, the missionary who baptized him was out working in his field one day. And the Lord told him, you need to go preach the gospel. He didn't know where he comes into the house. He tells his wife, <laugh>, I'm gonna go preach the gospel. She says, where <laugh>? He says, I don't know, but the Lord will tell me. He goes about 60 miles. And here are these two brothers who are living together. Uh, now Wilfred's not married, but his brother Mond, I think is his name.

Speaker 1 00:11:41 His brother is married. They listen to Elder Pulsifer. And 24 hours later or so he's baptized. Wow. He says, this is it. This is what I was looking for. And he's ready to go. Well, three months after that, so now you're in early 1834. This is when the Saints were having all that trouble in far West Missouri and things. This is when Zion's camp, as we now know it,

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> got organized. Well, Parley Pee Pratt came recruiting, and he comes to upstate New York where Wilfred and his brother are. And he says, Joseph Smith, the prophet is looking for 500 men to go redeem Zion, whatever that meant. Right? Yeah. <laugh>. And Wilfred says, count me in, I'm in. And his brother says, well, I've got a wife and family and I can't go right now. And so Wilfred goes, and he's one of the first to arrive in Kirtland.

Speaker 1 00:12:38 This is when he first meets the prophet Joseph Smith. So he is only been a member for three months. And he gets sent ahead. They sent kind of an advance group. They wanted to get everybody out of Kirtland before they gathered to make their trek. So they, they go to a place called Portage. I don't know how far it is. And now he's ready. And he sees this as a mission. I mean, he was called, yeah, the prophet called. And he's going up for this purpose. That's his first mission. This was Zion camp. Zion camp. It was Zion's camp. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, which he records is just phenomenal. And in fact, one of the key lessons he learned early in his, uh, church membership, he was going on all sorts of missions. He went on seven of them in the first, about thir 12 or 13 years, seven different missions.

Speaker 1 00:13:29 And he was going on, but this is the first Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So, and he's gonna be gone probably about eight or nine months. He's one of the ones Joseph Smith asked to stay and help the Saints move out of that county. And he, he's all in. But the lesson he learns on this first one is about consecrated service. And in fact, he does a very interesting thing. He actually, one of the saints in the area where, where Zion's camp ends up, has an extra room, and they were organized into companies and groups. And somebody in his group says, this member has an extra room, and we can all sleep inside instead of outside. Now. It had rained hard. All it was a mess, you know, I can imagine. It's pretty miserable. So they all arranged their bedding in this room kind of preempting everybody else. Well, then cases of cholera develop.

Speaker 1 00:14:23 Oh boy. And that's where they put all the cholera people. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So now they're gonna have to burn everything they put in the room. <laugh>. Oh, no. <laugh>. And Wilfred makes this, this comment that, you know, I learned a very important lesson. I should consecrate everything to the Lord and not hold back. He said, and I was being selfish. Mm-Hmm. And he says, I've learned that lesson now I'm never gonna do that again. And he didn't. Yeah. And then to, I mean, if there's a way to summarize his complete life, I mean, talk about consecrated. Yeah. <laugh>. I mean, he gave it all he did. And, uh, and he was a hard worker, you know. Well, in fact, when he is there in, in Jackson County, he actually records everything that he had because he, he's so detailed every, anyway. And what he writes down, he only had probably 10 or \$15 worth of stuff.

Speaker 1 00:15:11 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's it. Wow. That's all he is got. But he consecrates it all. Yeah. Gives it all to the Lord. Yeah. So that Zion's camp experience was the beginning of many Yeah. Of much consecrated service. Right. True. Yep. Anything else in that world of consecrated service that worth mentioning or? Well, he wants to go on a mission. When he was baptized. His brother was older. So his brother gets made a priest and he gets made a teacher. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Well, he then gets a call to the Southern States mission with a companion, and they're gonna go to Arkansas, Tennessee, and one other state. But they have

to do everything themselves because they're just dirt roads. They're, yeah. This is pretty early days. Yeah. There's no organized mission or mission president, or, yeah. Yeah. So this is 1834. Yeah. Yeah. And it's without person script, and Mm-Hmm.

Speaker 1 00:16:01 <affirmative>. So he gets started by saying, I'm gonna do this. We're gonna go see if we can't convert some people, I guess Kentucky was the other state. Hmm. And so he and his companion first half have to dig out a canoe. They hollow out a log. Now, I would think that a log would be very roly. I mean, right. Yeah. I can't imagine. And I can, how long that takes. I don't know. To how out a Well, they took a few days to dig it out. Wow. And this actually becomes another characteristic that he learns on his missions, which is the joy of hard work. Yeah. Nobody worked harder than Wilford Woodruff. I mean, he records in his journal when he's about 70, that he's, he says, this is the first day that one of my kids can out home me in the garden. <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:16:47 I mean, he's out there <laugh>, you know, he's an apostle. Yeah. He's out there working in the garden every day. And, and when they went on this mission, one of the things they would do to repay people, they would actually do work for him. So they'd say, need anything built, need anything cleaned up? You need weeding done. I mean, in the garden, whatever it was. And so, and then they'd come back in and preach at night because they couldn't work. 'cause it was dark. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So it, it's very interesting. He clearly learns about hard work and he likes it. Yeah. I mean, it, it, you know, it's almost like an adrenaline rush. Yeah. At least I get that from reading some of his stuff. Yeah. And just reading that Temple Doctrine book of just to the end, like when it came even to temple work.

Speaker 1 00:17:32 Yeah. He was hours and hours in the temple. Yeah. Never saw. And really pounding that drum with the members of the church being like, we've got work to do. Like, let's get in the temple. Yeah. Yeah. And help these people that need the ordinances, you know? So Yeah. One of the things he records on this Southern states mission is they've been gone six or eight months, and his, they're in a swamp. It's muddy, it's raining. He gets a sudden sharp pain in his leg. And so he sits down on a log, and while he is sitting there, his companion says, I think I'm done. I'm going back to Kirtland to see my family <laugh> and leaves him. Holy cow. <laugh>. And Wilfred re records it as I got down on my knees, said a prayer that I'd be blessed that this pain would go away.

Speaker 1 00:18:18 It did. I stood up. And even though my companion had left me in a, in an alligator swamp is how he describes it. He said, I went on my way joyful at the work I was doing. Yeah. You know, and he'd always insert that word joyful in there when he said work. All work was joyful to him. Yeah. And could have been, I mean, a lot, his longevity of his life that he was just, he never Yeah. Sat down long enough to die. You know, he just Exactly. He just kept going. So, yeah. That's cool. And part of this joyful work was he really felt called to record everything that took place. And so he said he felt like a fish out of water until he recorded something in his journal that he thought was meaningful and significant. And he'd record everything. And then at the end of the year, he'd actually do a summary.

Speaker 1 00:19:08 And it was of how many people he'd preach the gospel to, or how many people he'd confirmed or baptized or given a blessing to. And he'd count 'em <laugh>. Wow. He was just a detailed guy. Yeah. And with hindsight, such a blessing to the church and church history Yeah. To know all that. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Now, obviously we have, you have a lot of work ahead of you with the Wilford Woodruff papers. Yeah. I mean, you asked the, the question earlier about the church's role. The Wilford Woodruff Papers has a partnership with several different church entities. One of them is family search, because there are about 20,000 people mentioned in his journals. Wow. So these are people he crossed paths with. Some of them he knew. Well, others of them were just somebody he met, like on the Southern States Mission. After his companion leaves, he goes on into Memphis and he goes, tells a great story, but goes into a, an inn.

Speaker 1 00:20:04 And he records the name of the person, the proprietor. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so that's one of the names. Well, one of the things that the church is very interested in is if we do little biographical sketches of those, attaching them to the family search record, and then they let the descendants of that person who are already in, as you know, family search is kind of one big family tree, right? Yeah. So anytime you can get somebody identified in that tree, everything downstream that is already connected suddenly becomes Oh. And it turns out that with the people we've identified thus far, there are about 53 million descendants of those people. Wow. Which is pretty remarkable. Yeah. And people are interested, you know? Yeah. The work of Elijah is going on <laugh>. Yeah. And they really wanna know about their ancestors. Yeah. So, you know, if you knew your ancestor, gosh, he was a proprietor of this inn, and they try and play a trick on Wilford Woodruff at the end.

Speaker 1 00:21:07 So <laugh>. Yeah. So it's very memorable. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. But it's great. And so if your, if you wanna know if your ancestor met Wilford Woodruff, you'll probably find that out. 'cause he probably recorded it. Yeah. Yeah. In fact, eventually, all of 20,000 of them, if we can identify you need a place or a date or something Right. To put it in family search, then those people will all be there. And then they'll naturally connect with everybody else who's already there. Yeah. And that's, I mean, that's just one example of a partnership with the church. Yeah, yeah, yeah. To, to make those connections. So yeah. Anything else with, uh, joyful hard work? No, but I will <laugh>, he was never afraid to open his mouth, which is the third thing I would say was unique to him. And it starts with, he leaves this alligator swamp.

Speaker 1 00:21:55 He goes to Memphis, to this inn, and he tells the proprietor, now he's been in the mud. I mean, and he nailed down in the mud to pray. So I'm Myah says he's a mess. And he tells the proprietor, he says, I don't have any money, but I could you put me up for the night and feed me. And the proprietor asks him, what do you do? I'm a preacher of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what he tells him. And the proprietor thinks, oh, the guys I know that would have a lot of fun with this guy. So he says, sure, I'll do that if you'll preach. Well, Wilford senses that he, the guy wants to have him preach so that they can make fun or whatever. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so he plays hard to get, which only makes the proprietor more interested in having him preach <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:22:44 And so he feeds Wilfred, and while he does the group that the proprietor invites comes, well, there're all the big wigs in the town of Memphis at the time. 500 people. So this must have been a big in Yeah. But there were 500 people there. By the time he's finished, he tries to get 'em to sing a song. And all the proprietor's friends are right around him sitting right there. But nobody will sing. Well, Wilfred doesn't have a good voice, <laugh>. So he reads the words to the hymn, and then he says the prayer. And then as he gets ready to preach, the way Wilfred records it is, he said, the Lord revealed to me who these people were and what kinds of things they had done in their life. So they appeared to be a high society, but in fact there was a lot of shadiness in their lives.

Speaker 1 00:23:41 So he proceeded to tell 'em <laugh> little repentance. Of course. Yeah. And then he is calling him to repentance. Yeah. Yeah. But they're shocked. How can he know this? How can this Mormon boy know this? Yeah. And he finishes this. He, he says what he feels inspired to say, calls him to repentance. And then he closes with prayer, and within three minutes he says, there is nobody in the room but him. <laugh>. Oh my goodness. All 500 of 'em disappear. Where where are they? Well, you know, in the, the Bible verse where the accusers, right. Yeah. Accusers are not here. They're not there anymore. And so then he goes up to the room that the proprietor had given him to sleep in that night. Well, he got paper thin walls. And the proprietor and his closest friends were in the next room. And they're trying to figure out how did he know?

Speaker 1 00:24:36 How did he know all that? We've never told anybody all those things. Uhhuh <affirmative>, you know, and obviously they've been in some of it together and stuff. And Wilfred thinks, maybe I should go next door. Maybe they'll be more receptive now. And he listens to them and they say, I don't think we wanna talk to him any further. We can't trust that what he says won't be even worse. Yeah. Yeah. <laugh> interesting. So, so they all leave and Wilford Dick gets a good night's sleep and then goes on his way the next day. Wow. And there's a, just a great example that he's willing to speak what the Lord puts in his heart. Right. Right. Regardless of thence. Well, in fact, he's willing to open his mouth. Yeah. Yeah. And in fact, there's a great set of verses in the doctrine and covenants about opening your mouth.

Speaker 1 00:25:19 And most mission presidents Uhhuh <affirmative> in our mission in London, they called it oss Open Your Mouth. So besides knocking on doors, you stop people on the subway or any public transportation or on the street and you, and you open your mouth. And that's how we got a lot of our investigators. Yeah. It's half the battle in your mouth. Just gotta speak. Right. And that's what he did. Yeah. And he was willing to do that anywhere he went. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. I mean, he just thought, yeah, of course I'm gonna do that. Why wouldn't I? Yeah. And he said what he was told to say. Another great example of that is when he goes on his mission to England, this is when all of the nine of the apostles go to England. And he's one of those, and his assigned area is Staffordshire. That's where the potteries are, where Wedgwood and all of those people that make fine China and things.

Speaker 1 00:26:14 And so that's his assigned area. He starts preaching in the first month or so to six weeks, month to six weeks. He probably baptizes 40 people or so. And it's going great. And one Sunday, in fact, it's right at his birthday. He preaches, he has three sermons set

up that day. And other churches would let him preach until they figured out that he was gonna take their converts. <laugh>, but <laugh>. Yeah. So he's preaching in, in different places, and he gets to the one in the evening and they're singing the opening song, and he gets this impression, this is your last sermon here in pottery. And so he stands up, he tells the people, I'm sorry to tell you, he's got lots of appointments set up. 'cause he is still baptizing people up there. And he says, this will be my last time I'm to go somewhere else.

Speaker 1 00:27:10 And that's what he does. I mean, he now, he doesn't know where he is going at the time. He baptizes some people at the end of that meeting. And then the next day he goes in a private place and asks the Lord, where am I going? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, he says, south <laugh>. Wow. And so he goes south and that's when he gets to the John Benbo farm. And that's when eventually 1800 people get baptized because of that. Because John Benbo and his wife Jane both get baptized. That's the United Brethren that have about the Gadd, Phil Elm Chapel as part of that. So that's why it became the first foreign church building that the church owned, because the United Brethren gave it to the church when they all joined. Eventually. All but one of those 600 United brethren and their, obviously their wives and everything else in there, they all joined except one <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:28:09 Wow. So they took the building with them. Right. <laugh> and, and they gave the building to the church Wow. So that people could continue to meet in it. Yeah. But that's Wilford being will willing to open his mouth and do whatever the Lord asks him to do. Yeah. And that's a great lesson. Yeah. Exact obedience concept, right? Yeah. Yeah. Just not only refining your Yeah. Spiritual communication, but by following it. And that's a lot of the refining that happens is Yeah. When you're willing to follow it. And that's really from his early missions. That's the fourth thing that I'd identify, was this exact obedience. So one of the great incidents when he is preaching at the Benbo Farm, John Benbo, and about 40 of these United Brethren were registered preachers. Turns out you had to have a license in Great Britain at the time to preach.

Speaker 1 00:28:58 You also had to be in a place that was registered for er to have this kind of religious thing. Well, John Bebo's Farm House had a room that was registered for that. So it was all legal. Well, that's when this constable comes and comes, A local minister sends his constable to go arrest Wilford Woodruff for preaching. He's actually trying to arrest him so that he won't be able to do sheep stealing, as they called it. <laugh>. Yeah. And so this constable shows up and he right at the start of the meeting, and he interrupts the meeting and he, he says, are you Wilford Woodruff? And he says, yes. And he said, I'm here to arrest you. And he says, well, on what grounds for preaching? And he says, I'll tell you what, I'm about to start. Why don't you just take my chair? He'd been sitting right in the front, sit right here next to me and I'll, we'll work this out at the end of my preaching.

Speaker 1 00:29:57 And he comments that this is a registered place and this is all legal, and he's got his license. And so he goes ahead and preaches. And then at the end close, which was very common in those missionary days, say, how many are ready for baptism? Well, there were seven or eight people that raised their hands. And the constables, one of 'em, <laugh>. Oh my goodness. And he baptized him that night. <laugh> <laugh>. Nice. So, you know, he was

exactly obedient to go there, but he also knows that he's supposed to preach this sermon, so he is gonna preach it, and then he is gonna talk to the constable. You know, so he never gets arrested. But it, there was not no grounds really to arrest him. Yeah, yeah. But Constable didn't know that when he went out there. Yeah. And now he's, now he's a member now.

Speaker 1 00:30:43 He's a latter saint. Right. That's cool. That's right. Anything else around exact obedience we wanna touch on, or is that a good, good <crosstalk>? I think that's a, that's a good start. So let me just re review. In the first few years he, he had Zion's camp. That's 1834. He goes to the Southern States Mission at the end of 1834, beginning of 1835, he gets made an elder, ordained an elder. Okay. Partway through his mission. So now we can do confirming as well, Uhhuh <affirmative>. Then in 18, uh, 37, he marries Phoebe. So that's Phoebe Carter, who, you know, it's, they're both signed up as new converts. And she is just like he is in terms of anywhere the Lord wants us to go, anything he wants us to do, we're ready to do it. Yeah. And they're great support to each other and so on.

Speaker 1 00:31:43 And they go to the Eastern States and the Fox Islands, and he had been anxious to get this mission call because his patriarchal blessing had told him that he would preach the gospel on the iss of the sea. Well, it turns out that the Fox islands in Maine, the other iss of the sea <laugh>. Yeah. But it, it was also near where her family lived and some of his relatives lived. And so this mission was perfect because he ends up baptizing several members of her family, several members of his extended family, and also baptizing several families in the Fox Islands. He has lots of opposition, but you know, he's figuring out nothing's gonna stop me now. And then they're gonna move to Missouri with this group. And so they leave at the end of the mission, they leave and take this group, and that's when Phoebe dies.

Speaker 1 00:32:45 And then she is given the choice by the Lord, if you'll stick with Wilford wherever it leads, you can go back or you can stay as stay in the spirit world. She decides to go back. Oh, wow. Well, he's so much in tune that he'd already offered her to the Lord when they thought she was dead. But then he senses that something's changed. And so he gives her a blessing. And there she comes <laugh> where she comes and she recounts to him, her being in the room with these two angels who give her this choice. And she's all in. Yeah. She's back. And then they continue on their way, and then a, they have a, an, he does his mission to England after that. That's in 1839 to 1841. He then goes to a mission to the Eastern States. In fact, he does two of them.

Speaker 1 00:33:42 And on the second one of those is when the prophet is martyred. So he's not there. He's in the Eastern States. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And then in 1845, he's called as a European mission president. And he and Phoebe take their family with them to Europe. Wow. To preside, basically the British Isles. I mean, that's where they were. And to preside over that mission for a couple of years. Yeah. And at this time, he's an apostle as well, is that right? Yes. He was made an apostle. He, he got the word from Thomas B. Marsh, who was president of the quorum, sent him a letter while he was in the Fox Islands, but he hasn't been ordained. He actually goes too far west. This is at Revelation that Joseph Smith had received that the apostles are to leave from far west, even though it's now in basically enemy hands. Hmm.

Speaker 1 00:34:38 You know, the, the tractors from the church were in charge, and so they do it at 2:00 AM but he actually gets ordained an apostle along with a couple of the other apostles on the cornerstone, the temple site, because that's all there is at the temple site really at that time. And then they go back to Kirtland to leave on their mission. So exact obedience he does, the Lord said it was supposed to be in Far West. So we're going to far West. Yeah. Brigham Young and a couple of the other apostles are who ordained him an apostle. Yeah. And then at the, the end of the, I mean, he sort of just goes from being a missionary, becomes an apostle, and then that launches him off to a different season of life with temples and apostleship. Well, he's, he's in charge of one of the pioneer companies.

Speaker 1 00:35:27 You know, he goes back and forth a couple of times. He's, he's all in <laugh>. Yeah. Never stops. He never stops a Anything else about his missionary years that that would be worth mentioning? Or do we give a good summary there? No, I think, I think, you know, these things that he learned about consecrated service, and in fact, any mission president would love to have a missionary who said, <laugh>. Well, the things I've been working on are consecrated service, joyful, hard work, you know, opening my mouth, being willing to do whatever the Lord wants me to do. And what was the, the, uh, exact obedience, right? The exact obedience. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. I mean, if you're a mission president, that's like, he died and went to heaven. <laugh>. That's right. Yeah. And Wilfred learned all of those, and he's, he practices them. So you see it over and over again.

Speaker 1 00:36:14 Yeah. Yeah. That's fantastic. And again, he's just, uh, you know, feeds into his leadership and blesses him and the church for, for decades to come. So Yeah. Anything else worth mentioning as far as the, I even know that's a whole, maybe a whole nother podcast or not, but the later years at Temple work St. George Temple. Well, some of the things you see in this are that, so he was one of four apostles that was asked to memorize all of the temple ordinances in Lavu. And he then becomes, he kind of runs the endowment house in Salt Lake, but it was only doing live ordinances. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, when the temple in St. George is ready, Brigham Young calls him to be the president of the temple. He then works with Brigham and a couple of others. That's the first time they write down the ordinances.

Speaker 1 00:37:06 Prior to that, everybody memorized them. Yeah. And we're talking like six, seven hours worth of Oh yeah. I mean, this was, they today's Yeah. <laugh>. And so he writes them down and he becomes basically the steward of all things temple at that point. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, it's later that, that's 1877 when the temple is dedicated like they had with Navu, they dedicate the baptistry first, and they, as it gets more done, they dedicate more of it. But in August of 1877 is when the founding fathers and several prominent men and women come to him in the temple and basically say, why aren't you doing our work? Yeah. And this of course leads him to do the research to figure out who's who. He actually adds some people to the list that he, the Lord tells him, you ought to do this work for all of these.

Speaker 1 00:38:02 And so there are lots of 'em that he does. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But then he begins to start looking at, well, what about all the work that needs to be done? And prior to this time, they had not had people do work other than for their own ancestors. And of course he's now gonna be an avid genealogist. Yeah. And he ends up doing, having the work done for

3000 plus of his ancestors. But a lot of that was because he also goes to the Lord and he says, how am I gonna get this done? And the Lord says, well let other people help you. And that's when they start. Oh, you mean somebody who's done their own ordinances could come and do it for somebody else that isn't a relative Yeah. And all of that. So Yeah. That, I mean, he's so tenacious about things and he wants to do it exactly the way the Lord wants it done.

Speaker 1 00:38:58 And so you can see this continually refinement of temple ordinances. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> much more by 1898. And of course he's gonna then be in charge of making sure that the Manti temple, the Logan Temple, and the Salt Lake Temple, all are following the standards that have been set in St. George. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Which is great. Yeah. You know, became a model that blessed the following temples. Right. Yeah. Yeah. He then, obviously, once he becomes the prophet, when John Taylor passes away, it doesn't happen overnight. We now all know what's supposed to happen. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> he knew what was supposed to happen. But it turned out that because of polygamy and the pressure that the United States, the United States had already started taking assets and arresting people and everything else who are polygamists. So, and then they're gonna get even more severe. But initially when he becomes, when John Taylor dies, it's about, must be about 1887.

Speaker 1 00:40:04 He doesn't get made the prophet, but he is the president of the quorum of the 12. So he's effectively running the church, but he can't get the apostles to agree some of them Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> on his counselors. And in fact, even one of the young ones comes to him and suggests somebody else ought to be the prophet Oh, wow. <laugh>. And tells him who it should be, Uhhuh <affirmative>, you know, <laugh>. And, but he is so committed to, we're gonna do this the way the Lord wants it done, and that means we have to be unified. But he also is committed to, I need these counselors. And George Q Canon was one of those, and that was the issue was George Ku Canon was the smartest guy in the room, and everybody knew it, including George <laugh>. And it drove other people nuts, <laugh>. But he also knew Washington dc He knew the law, he knew what the government could and couldn't do, and they have to pass a law to do this 'cause they can't do it just because they say they wanna do it.

Speaker 1 00:41:09 And so he desperately wanted him and knew the Lord wanted him. Hmm. Well, it took not quite two years from the time John Taylor died before the first presidency gets organized in October of 89. And that was because they weren't unified. And he would have, towards the end of that period, he knew they had to get organized because he knew that polygamy and the issues around it, because they were about to take the temples. Yeah. And he said, we have to have a first presidency. And so he would have 12, 14 hour meetings with the 12. Of course now they're in hiding, so you gotta do it <laugh>. Yeah. Like that. It's tricky. And they do several days of those, and finally everybody feels the spirit and says, absolutely, this is right. We're all with you. And so October conference, there's a new first presidency. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:42:10 And, you know, it's only a year later before the manifesto. So Yeah. That was really needed crucial a first presidency to do that. Yeah. But he was patient, I mean, but he knew he wanted to do it the way the Lord wanted it done. Mm-Hmm. And that was unified. Yeah. Everybody's gotta be on board. Right. Yeah. And that's, you know, just reading generally about

his life, like from a leadership standpoint, just to see the, you know, just like those situations where there's this, uh, push and pull with decisions. Yeah. And we like to think that he woke up and <laugh>, he said, thus sayeth the Lord, this is the direction we're going. But yeah. And I think in modern day leadership, we have to be okay with someone that's like, man, why can't I get the relief society over on my side? You know? Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:42:51 But, but no, this is part of the, the consecration Yeah. The sanctification that happens of getting in and working it out. Yeah. And we become better people because of it. And why does it take so long? I mean, people often will comment on the church is being a very conservative organization in terms of rates of change. Now, president Nelson doesn't look like that <laugh>, but people would consider him conservative. But you also have to know that he would never have done all the things that people consider changes in the way we carry out the gospel. And Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> the way the church functions, unless it had been revealed by the Lord. 'cause President Nelson wouldn't have done it. And all of the apostles agreed. Yeah. So, yeah, it's a beautiful system. Yeah. It's a great system. Yeah. Awesome. Well, uh, any, if people wanted to kind of jump into the Wilford Woodruff papers and, I mean, what's available now and what, I mean, what, oh, what would you encourage people to do 25,000 pages have been published?

Speaker 1 00:43:53 There are three things you might think about doing. Okay. Obviously we use volunteers and interns extensively. Now the interns are paid part-time students. So they're particularly, you know, think of all your favorite institutions. And yes, we have them from there too. Uhhuh, <laugh>, <laugh>. So we probably have 50 or 60 interns. And they're terrific because they're very well trained. They love it, it's strengthening their testimony, but they then also help train our volunteers and pair with our volunteers. When we, when we get to the second stage of, first of all, you have to transcribe everything. And we're doing letters now, for example, that were mission calls or those people responding to their mission call, which are fascinating letters. So these are, Wilford Woodruff wrote a letter calling them, and they're writing back saying, well, I can't go right now, or, yeah, I'll drop everything and go.

Speaker 1 00:44:52 Or, you know, here's my situation. Could I wait for a few months? And, and then he writes back to 'em. So there's all of that kind of thing going on. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But being involved in the transcription, the verification, and getting it published online, we'd love those volunteers. So that's one thing to do. Cool. And it's more interesting than indexing, I can tell you <laugh>, which is still important, but, uh, and you can do it remotely. So my wife does some with our daughter where she's in Texas and you know, they've got their cell phones on, they're at their computers, but they're looking at the same thing on their computers. It's an edit system that we Yeah. Do everything on. So that's one kind of involvement. A second kind of involvement is we have a newsletter and we have all of these partnerships with other people, and they're identified in the newsletter.

Speaker 1 00:45:48 So if you wanna know what's exciting and what's recently been found and that kind of thing, you just go to our website, sign up for the newsletter, and we'll send you, every month you'll get a newsletter and it'll have quotes from Wilford Woodruff. And I'll mention one of the partnerships that we're doing now that is fascinating, is for Come Follow Me. 'cause

next year we do the Book of Mormon, then we're going back to church history. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Well, all of the things, by the time we get there, 90% of 'em will have been published on the website. So they'll all be referenced and come follow me. Oh, cool. So anytime Wilford Woodruff was involved or recorded or did something in connection with that section of the Doctrine and covenants, or this topic that's in, come follow me in that year, 2025, it'll have a footnote saying, go to this part, this place, and you'll be able to read the original and see what went on.

Speaker 1 00:46:48 That's cool. Which is really cool. And of course you can donate. That's the third thing. Absolutely. Sure. Because we're paying these interns, that's where most of the money we are raising is going. And they've really quickened the pace of the project. And in fact, now we're sharing with some of the other projects the church has going on, or partnering with like the Brigham Young Papers and other groups, because the interns have turned out to be such a blessing, and it's accelerated it and made us more productive, so it's not gonna be nearly as expensive as we thought. Oh, good. It's still gonna cost a fair amount of money. Yeah. And it's not gonna take as long as we thought. Awesome. So we're about half done, we think. We think it'll be a total of about seven years to get the whole thing done. Wow. We're at about three and a half.

Speaker 1 00:47:40 Okay. All right. Well, we'll look forward to following all this. And the website, I'll just say, yeah, wilfordwoodruffpapers.org. Nice. So if you put in Wilfordwoodworthpapers.org, it'll come up. Cool. And I know you have your, your team is active through social media with different things and quotes and Oh yeah. Instagram and all sorts of stuff. Yeah. All the, all the things that cool kids are doing these days. So, nice. That's great. Nice. Well, Steve, this has been great. I just love learning more and more about Wilford Woodruff and appreciate his service and example. He's Markable man. Yeah, yeah. Someday I'm gonna do a whole nother podcast interview, just him in the eternity. So <laugh>, it'll be great. Just as you reflect on Wilford Woodruff, how has learning about Wilford Woodruff helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? Uh, great question.

Speaker 1 00:48:27 Well, one is his testimony of the Savior comes through consistently. Everything he wrote. Hmm. I mean, so he's always talking about one of the most interesting parts, which we did early on. We decided to do the letters between Phoebe and Wilford So when Wilford's in England, so in the potteries down at John Bebo's farm and everything, Phoebe is back home. And so the way they communicate is by letter. And they, all, their letters bear testimony of the savior. And it is fascinating. In fact, he learns a baptism for the dead because Phoebe writes it in a letter from a sermon she heard Joseph Smith give. Wow. And they're so excited. But, you know, you get sad things too. Uh, Sarah, their daughter, he learns, died at age two. Hmm. And he's really sad. So is Phoebe. But they close the letter with, but we know where she is. We know what's going on. She's fine.

Speaker 1 00:49:42 That concludes this episode of the Leading Saints podcast. We'd love to hear from you about your questions or thoughts or comments. You can either leave a comment on the, uh, post related to this episode@leadingsaints.org or go to leading-saints.org/contact and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear

on the Leading Saints podcast, go to leading-saints.org/contact and share with us the information there. And we would love for you to share this with any individual you think this would apply to, especially maybe individuals in your ward council or other leaders that you may know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed. Remember up your teaching game by listening to the David Farnsworth presentation by visiting leading-saints.org/fourteen.

Speaker 2 00:50:34 It came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of Heaven, who brought forth a restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And when 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. The loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.