



The Acts of James E. Talmage | An Interview with Bryan Summers

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Speaker 1 00:00:01 Anthony Sweat has easily become one of my favorite BYU professors to interview. He's been on the podcast several times, and he also has a remarkable presentation about ambiguity of doctrine. In our Questioning Saints virtual library, he discusses healthy and unhealthy ways we approach doctrine, how to help others reconcile doctrine they find difficult to believe, especially when we don't know much about it. You can watch Professor Sweat's entire interview in the Questioning Saints Library by going to leading-saints.org/fourteen. This will give you access for 14 days at no cost to watch this presentation. You'll be better prepared as a leader when you do.

Speaker 1 00:00:43 So, you're checking us out as maybe a potential podcast you could start listening to. I know many of you have been listening for a long time, but let me just talk to the newbies for a minute. What is Leading Saints? What are we trying to do here with this podcast? Well, let me explain. Leading Saints is a nonprofit organization, a 501(c)(3) is what they call it. And we have a mission to help Latter Day Saints be better prepared to lead. Now, of course, often means in the context of a calling, it may mean in your local community, your work assignments. We've heard about our content influencing all sorts of leaders in all sorts of different contexts. We invite you to listen to this episode and maybe a few others of our 500 plus episodes that we have out there, jump in and begin to learn and begin to consider some of these principles we talk about on the Leading Saints podcast. Here we go. Today we're headed down to St. George, Utah to chat with Bryan Summers. How are you, Bryan? Oh,

Speaker 2 00:01:47 Very well, thank you. Good.

Speaker 1 00:01:48 Now you're a long time leading Saints listener, right?

Speaker 2 00:01:51 Yeah, I am. Yeah. I, I, I think I started listening back in 2015.

Speaker 1 00:01:55 Wow. 2000. I was just such a young, cute, uh, podcaster, you know? True. Didn't have a clue what I was doing, so <laugh>. That's awesome. And were you a bishop at that time?

Speaker 2 00:02:05 Yeah, I think I just, just, uh, barely become a bishop and, and yeah, it was really good to find it. I remember, I mean, a lot of 'em were really helpful. And I still remember one in particular with the stake president in New Mexico that just, I listened to it maybe three or four times. It was very, very helpful.

Speaker 1 00:02:21 Yeah. That's cool. Awesome. And did someone recommend it leading Saints to you, or did, did Google put it in

Speaker 2 00:02:28 Front of you? It must have been Google. 'cause I have no memory. I don't even remember the first time finding it. I just, as long as I've been a bishop, I just remember having it.

Speaker 1 00:02:36 Oh, that's cool. So, well, I'm glad, glad it served you well. And, and it was in, uh, St. George where you served as Bishop?

Speaker 2 00:02:41 No, it was Yuma, Arizona.

Speaker 1 00:02:43 Oh, wow.

Speaker 2 00:02:44 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:02:45 Is that, uh, I don't know much about Yuma. Is that a a, a large city or a

Speaker 2 00:02:49 Small? It's about the size of St. George. So you got about a hundred thousand people in the summer and 200,000 in the winter,

Speaker 1 00:02:56 <laugh>. Nice. Any highlights from serving as Bishop that you think back on, or principles that would be worth mentioning before we move on to our subject here? Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:03:06 There were a few things I learned. One of 'em is like, if you've got the spirit, it's actually the easiest calling in the church. I think if you have the spirit, because you just follow what the spirit says, things fall in place. That's if you don't have the spirit, oh, it's like walking up a stream. It is the hardest calling in the world. I, uh, would talk to my parents on Zoom every Sunday night, and if they said, boy, you look tired. I noticed a pattern. I would think back during the day, and it was a day. I didn't feel the spirit much. I was coming, I was working just as hard as any other day. Mm-Hmm. But if I didn't feel the spirit that day, like I just looked at by the end of the day, so the spirit's key. Yeah. And you gotta get the spirit.

Speaker 1 00:03:45 Love it. Now, have you always been a lifelong reader of like, church history or Yeah. History in general? Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:03:51 Well, I was a huge reader as a kid. Like as a kid I was a huge reader. And then in high school I was a massive reader. I would just, uh, some summer days I would just spend all day reading and I really got into church history back then. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:04:04 Hmm. And primarily it's history that, I mean, reading about people. Is that, would you say that's the, the primary focus of your reading? Uh,

Speaker 2 00:04:11 It is lately, for sure. I love stories. I absolutely love stories. And our church is just full of excellent, excellent stories and there's too many stories so that so many great stories fall, uh, between the cracks. But I think when I was a, when I was a teenager, it was probably more doctrinal. Hmm. I was reading a lot of books by prophets and apostles and, and yeah, just anything, anything my parents had, anything I could get at the library.

Speaker 1 00:04:36 Yeah. Awesome. Now, this has led you to this project on x, which a Ukrainian account called Acts of the Apostles, which I think is an awesome title since in the Bible there's, there's a book called the Acts, uh, or the Acts of the Apostles, right? I assume that's what you were Absolutely. You were basing this off of <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:04:52 Yeah, absolutely. I'm trying to do a modern day acts of apostles.

Speaker 1 00:04:55 That's cool. What, where did this idea come from?

Speaker 2 00:04:58 When I was a teenager, my, my dad told me something. He was put into a stake presidency by Bruce Arm McConkey when I was much, much younger. So I don't even remember it. I was probably early grade school, maybe younger. But he said something in high school that surprised me. He said, you know, the funniest person I've ever met is Bruce arm, McConkey <laugh>. Which you wouldn't, you wouldn't get from hearing his

Speaker 1 00:05:21 Talks. Yeah. That's not the, uh, typical characteristic of Bruce arm McConkey. You hear about <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:05:25 No. And my dad is a really funny guy, and he knows lots of funny, funny people, and he only knew Bruce arm McConkey for that weekend. That's the only time he, he did it Uhhuh. He said, I, I don't think I've ever laughed more than that weekend with Bruce arm McConkey. So it made me want to get to know the apostles and prophets, not just what we see on the podium, but I, I just want get to know who they were and yeah. So that's, that's basically it. And I was telling my dad this, I was reminding him about this lately, and he said that, you know, arm McConkey is the savior on the chosen, you know how the savior on the Chosen Oh yeah. Is kind of funny. And he's just, he puts everybody at ease. He goes, yeah, sure. That was Bruce. That was Bruce arm McConkey.

Speaker 1 00:06:06 Oh, wow.

Speaker 2 00:06:07 So, wow. And anyways, and you, you read the book about Bruce Arm McConkey written by his son, and that actually really, really comes through. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:06:15 I remember reading that it's been so many years that there's certain stories in there that I remember, like him, he would sort of, uh, rehearse like talks as he drove down the, the road. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> as you remember that, that portion, because he's known as this orator, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that, that was just so captivating from the lectern. And you could tell he was well practiced. I mean, and you think back then in the, I don't know what it was, forties, fifties, you know, there was, there probably wasn't a lot of radio stations, let alone podcasts to listen to. Right,

Speaker 2 00:06:42 Right. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:06:42 And so, you know, when you're driving hours, hours and hours of driving, there's, that's sort of what you do. You know, that's

Speaker 2 00:06:49 How you entertain and

Speaker 1 00:06:50 You practice your talk.

Speaker 2 00:06:50 That's right. Yeah. That's right. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:06:52 Really cool. And then, so from there, have you been recording just these stories that captured you as you read church history, or, and then you decided to put 'em on X?

Speaker 2 00:07:02 Well, a couple of years ago, I thought it would be awesome. I wanted to hear a podcast where they start with Thomas B. Marsh, go all the way to Ulysses Stories, just one episode, <laugh>. And I thought, okay, I'll do that. So I just started, every time I was at di, if I saw an Apostles biography, I'd pick it up.

Speaker 1 00:07:18 Oh,

Speaker 2 00:07:18 Yeah. And then I tried my first one with Thomas B. Marsh, and it was dismal. I mean, I was just stumbling. I could not get that 20 minutes or whatever I was trying to do. And so I put that on the back burner, but I kept reading the stories and then just making a mark. If there was a story that I was like, oh, I'd love it. Basically, if there was any story, I wanted to stop whatever my wife was doing and tell her, like, interrupt her. If it was a story that I wanted to interrupt my wife to tell her if it was that good, I'd make a little mark. And at the beginning of this year, I realized, okay, I've got all these stories, got all these marks in these books. And I thought, well, it'll take, it'll take 20 minutes a day to put a story on Twitter. And so that's how it started.

Speaker 1 00:08:00 Nice. And so you, you basically go through random apostles, you're not necessarily going in any particular order, right?

Speaker 2 00:08:07 No, it was very random at the beginning. Now I try to do like one from the first 10 apostles, then one from the 11 to 20. So I'm trying not to miss any eras when I go. And then I get up to apostle, like 87 or whatever, and then I'll go back and do the first one of the first 10 and just try to cycle through.

Speaker 1 00:08:26 Yeah. And to put that into context, so Elder Reland was the 100th apostle called in modern times, right? Yes. Uhhuh. And so, and we've had a few more since then, obviously. And so there's roughly been a hundred plus, you know, with additional, a few more of apostles called, uh, that's a life for each one, obviously with full of stories. And many of them have biographies or at least things written about them. And that's where you're diving into.

Speaker 2 00:08:50 Yeah. I don't know what I'll do when I get to the ones that don't have a biography written about them. <laugh>

Speaker 1 00:08:55 So Nice. Yeah. Well, there's always a obscure, you know, passage or writing out there, journal entry. Maybe you'll Yep. You'll stumble across, but maybe not a lot. So basically, I love seeing on x the, the updates of the pictures, you know, your, the profile picture of your acts of the apostles page updates, depending on who you're talking about that week or that for that, uh, that series of threads on X.

Speaker 2 00:09:18 Yeah. I try to put a really young picture of them, usually when they're in their twenties, or maybe if they're on their mission, I'll put a picture there. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So there's sometimes, you know, right now I'm doing Howard w Hunter, and I guess a lot of people have seen young ones. Whenever you've got a prophet or a president, there's a lot of biographies and a lot of pictures. But then you have somebody like say, well, James e Talmage, like his, his picture when he was a young man, it's just, it just endears you to him. You know what I mean? Yeah. It's, yeah. I like that. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:09:46 I think when they're, the older pictures, I mean, anybody who's older looks like a wise sage, you know? Yep. It's like this, this guy's got stories and wisdom that I've gotta hear, but it, uh, humanizes him a little bit to see him as a, you know, they're just figuring out life as a 20, 30-year-old, like the rest of us.

Speaker 2 00:10:01 Yeah. They don't know where the story ends. They have no idea what's about to happen. And you kind of see that when you see the pictures.

Speaker 1 00:10:07 Now, is Howard w Heter the first apostle that you're doing that later became the president of the church?

Speaker 2 00:10:13 I don't think so. It might be, and I can't remember because I've, I've now got a bit ahead of when I've, like, I'm, I'm working on David O. McKay right now in my readings and

Speaker 1 00:10:24 Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:10:25 And so, to be honest with you, I'm not sure. I might've done one before now.

Speaker 1 00:10:30 Gotcha. But you'll do, uh, whether they became Prophet of the church or not, you're, you're exploring the lives of the acts of the Apostles, so that's really cool.

Speaker 2 00:10:36 One through 1 0 3 now that we got Patrick here, and it's 1 0 3. No, I did do George Albert Smith.

Speaker 1 00:10:42 Oh, nice.

Speaker 2 00:10:42 And George Albert Smith was great. And I've already researched Heer J Grant, which has one of my top five stories. I cannot wait to tell that one when we get to it. Sounds so funny. It's such a good story.

Speaker 1 00:10:54 That's cool. That's cool. And, and you're mainly focusing on specific stories, not necessarily quotes or general conference talks. These are stories from their life. Yeah. I was

Speaker 2 00:11:02 Originally gonna do, I was originally gonna do like stories and quotes, and I just gravitated to the stories for whatever reason. I love the quotes. And when I do Ezra t Benson, Ezra Taf, Benson's grandfather, I'll probably have more quotes because his biography was like kind of short on stories, but long on amazing quotes. So on that one, I think I'll, I'll do a little bit more quotes.

Speaker 1 00:11:27 Yeah. This is great. And, uh, we're, we're talking behind the scenes, seeing how ways we can further, uh, you know, share these stories, uh, through the Leading Saints platform, whatnot. But in the meantime, uh, definitely people should check out. Your ex account will link to it, of course, acts of the Apostles. And just a little caveat here, a few years ago, I think this was one of the first people I ever interviewed on the podcast, he had mentioned just this off comment about how much he loved the stories you hear from general conference or another Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, other places of, you know, I was visiting a, a stake conference, you know, this is an apostle or a, the 70 with, you know, Neil Maxwell. And we were driving to this church and he said this thing like, this is wisdom that's passed within these, these leaders. And I called it teachers, or I'm sorry, I called it Leaders, teaching Leaders. And then I shortened it to Leader. To Leader. Yeah. And so I had these short episodes, this was years ago, and you can still find 'em on the podcast or on the website where I, uh, clip out that these stories that are told from the lectern of general conference and chair. And I, I just love hearing these things. So you have to flag me when, uh, when you come across those types of stories. 'cause they're, they're all over in these biographies.

Speaker 2 00:12:38 Oh, absolutely. Because they're all being mentored by somebody that was an, a possible forum. Well, I think the best, and I think you'd mentioned earlier that you'd read this, but the Henry b ironing biography Yeah. Is rich in that Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I mean, the stories about what he learned from Harold B. Lee and Boyd Kay Packer, and a bunch of the other ones, really powerful stuff.

Speaker 1 00:12:59 Yeah. Yeah. And this is a great thing, you know, if there's a leader out there, and I know that, you know, when you're serving as Bishop or in some of these leadership roles, it's a very busy time. But I would really encourage you to, to pick up these books from time to time, or read a chapter or two. And it is so comforting to just sort of see their life from that perspective. And you learn so much and gain so much respect for these, these individuals. And then when they stand in conference and speak, you're, they're just, you're more endeared toward them. You know, it's just, it's awesome. For

Speaker 2 00:13:29 Sure. That's absolutely right.

Speaker 1 00:13:30 Cool. Anything else about the, the account that people should look for or things you're doing there, or,

Speaker 2 00:13:36 Yeah. Well, yeah, please. Uh, uh, if you have any comments, a lot of people are, well, if I make a mistake, I really appreciate people, uh, correcting me sometimes. I'll say something I just said, Howard w Hunter was the first apostle from Idaho. Uh, he is actually the third apostle from Idaho. I found out Oh, yeah. Really quickly. So, so come on. And or if there's a story, you know, a lot of times I'll, I'll, like, I did M Russell Ballard fairly recently, and a lot of people had em, Russell Ballard stories that just experiences they'd had with him. It was very touching. Mm Oh yeah. To hear them. I love when people share stuff like that. And so, yeah, please. Yeah, please feel free to, feel free to reach out to me. I love, uh, share what you've got.

Speaker 1 00:14:17 I think, uh, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I think Howard w Hunt, he was one of the few apostles that was called to as an apostle, uh, from a being a stake president. Right. Yeah. He didn't go through the, the typical ranks of 70 and whatnot. And he's just a, a stake president in California, <laugh>. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:14:33 Just a great stake

Speaker 1 00:14:34 President. And

Speaker 2 00:14:35 We go a good job. Yeah. Him and Spencer w Kimball are the only two I know about. I'm sure there were other ones, but, uh, yeah. Yeah. He was,

Speaker 1 00:14:42 Yeah. I still remember reading about Spencer w Kimball, the phone call he gets, I think, in his, you know, his son's like, Hey, someone's on the phone for you. And there he is in the kitchen being called as an apostle <laugh>, and he's like, you know, the rest of his life was changed for

Speaker 2 00:14:54 Sure. Oh, man. Yeah. And, and our church as well. I mean, oh yeah. That guy was a powerhouse.

Speaker 1 00:14:58 Oh, man. Love it. All right. So one thing we wanna do is, you know, you've told so many stories about different apostles that we just maybe wanna focus on one or two during this recording. And of course, you know, I'd love to have you back on. Maybe we

explore some others and, uh, learn from them, and especially the leadership principles that are, that are, uh, that we can harvest from, from these lives. So we're gonna talk about first James e Talmage Yeah. And sort of do a, a, a quick deep dive on his life. This is one, I mean, any, generally any member of the church hears James e Chama, and you think Jesus the Christ as far as the book, Jesus, the Christ that he wrote in the temple. And I've been in the room, you know, where supposedly he lived and, and wrote and things like that.

Speaker 1 00:15:40 Have you really? Uh, yeah. So if you're a, that's, I was a temple worker there for a few, a few short months, Uhhuh <affirmative>. And, and yeah, you can go back there and, and there's the fireplace there and things like that. So, again, I may be wrong. I'm, we're open to any, uh, correction on, as you, as you say, we may, uh, perpetuate some faith promoting, uh, rumors here that aren't actually stories. And that's the, that's some times the tricky thing is I'll hear stories at times and I think, Ooh, that's not actually accurate. Right. And so we're open to

Speaker 2 00:16:07 Being frank. Well, one of, one of the only things I thought I knew about, uh, James e Talmage was that Albert Einstein said he was the smartest person he knew. I heard that on my mission. And so Oh, really?

Speaker 1 00:16:17 Yeah. Is it true? No.

Speaker 2 00:16:19 Well, <laugh> I doubt it. I doubt it's true. Because James e Talmage was a little bit before Albert Einstein. Yeah. You know what I mean? I mean, Albert Einstein, it's probably mixing some stories. 'cause Albert Einstein was good friends with Henry b ING's dad.

Speaker 1 00:16:32 Ah, that's right. That's right.

Speaker 2 00:16:34 Yeah. And, uh,

Speaker 1 00:16:34 That's another good one. There's the Mormon scientist that book about, oh, uh, president ING's dad is phenomenal.

Speaker 2 00:16:40 Love that book. Oh, man. I recommend that to everybody. Yes.

Speaker 1 00:16:43 Very good.

Speaker 2 00:16:44 Yeah. My favorite part is when he is telling Einstein about the plan of salvation. You know what I mean?

Speaker 1 00:16:50 I forget that

Speaker 2 00:16:51 Part. Oh, yeah. He's telling about the gospel and the plan of salvation. And Einstein goes, well, what about dogs? And, uh, he

Speaker 1 00:16:58 Said, he said, what,

Speaker 2 00:16:59 What about dogs? He was concerned about what happens to dogs, of course. And Henry Ironing Sr. He said, well, I'm not quite sure if it's anything's been said, but God loves dogs. I'm sure he is up there. And he said that Einstein seemed very pleased with that response.

Speaker 1 00:17:14 Nice. Awesome. All right. Back to Jamesie Town here. Okay. So where's a good jumping out point? I, I assume there's a biography I've never read. Yeah. His biography, if there is one. There

Speaker 2 00:17:22 Is, there's a very good one. It's written by his son, and a lot of times my favorite apostle biographies are actually written by their sons. Mm-Hmm. Because you can just sort of feel the affection. And they've got a lot of family stories. Like, there are several times in this book on James z Tama, it's like, he never wrote about this in his journal, but we, we told the story and teased him about it all the time. There's one story I'll tell later that, that he's like, yeah, he never wrote about it in his journal. Never talked about it, but we mentioned it to him constantly.

Speaker 1 00:17:49 Nice. Love it.

Speaker 2 00:17:50 Yeah. So it, it was written by his son, I think, in the late se, or early seventies or something, well after he had passed away. And it's a good one. It's got a lot of good stories. It gives you a good idea of what kind of a guy he was to, to actually know him, know. Awesome.

Speaker 1 00:18:03 Cool. Yeah. Well, where should we start with James z Dage? Well,

Speaker 2 00:18:06 The one thing everybody knows about him, so I'll just get this outta the way, is Jesus the Christ. It's actually, if you think about books that have been written, I think it was like 19. It was in the 1910s that it was written and on good reads, it's still like in the top, maybe 12. I mean, it's like, and you look at the other books below it, you're like, yep, I heard of that. Everything after, not so much. Like, it's, it's amazing that a book's had that longevity.

Speaker 1 00:18:30 So it's in the top 12 of, of what? On Good

Speaker 2 00:18:32 Reads. On good reads of people that still write reviews and are still saying they read it.

Speaker 1 00:18:38 Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:18:39 And most books, I mean, in a hundred years, most books are gone. The fact that it's most church books actually are gone. Very few of them last that long. But for Jesus, the Christ to last that long is, is absolutely amazing. He wrote it in seven months and five days.

Speaker 1 00:18:53 Wow.

Speaker 2 00:18:54 Yeah. I mean, he's a workhorse. We'll talk about his work ethic later on. But he was an absolute workhorse. And it's impressive. But you have to realize, he was also, he had written lectures. He'd already done a lecture series on each chapter. So he'd already done <crosstalk>

Speaker 1 00:19:08 Because he was a professor. Right. That was his day job. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:19:11 He was a professor. He was a, a geologist. He was a professor of geology. And so, and a very, very good lecturer. As a matter of fact, I was gonna talk about this later, but I'll talk about it now because I'm thinking about it. When he was an apostle, if there was a hostile audience, they would send James E Talmage because he could get up there and you'd have a crowd that just did not like the church. You know what I mean? It just had heard bad things about the church. And he could tell the story of Brigham Young and coming over to Utah, and he would have him in tears. By the end. He would have 'em at the end. They'd be like, wow, Brigham Young's the greatest American ever. You know what I mean? <laugh>, he would just, he was just able to capture people that way. I don't know that any of those talks were written down or anything, but that, I mean, if I had a time machine that's, yeah.

Speaker 1 00:19:57 I would

Speaker 2 00:19:57 Love to go and sit and listen to one of one of those lectures.

Speaker 1 00:20:01 Wow. So, yeah. That's great. And then you talk about him, the bravery mixed with compassion. Yeah. What do you mean by that? Well,

Speaker 2 00:20:07 Okay, so he was, he was an incredibly brave person, and he was also a very compassionate person at the same time. But I think he was brave first. Like when he was a child, he, uh, was one of the things. And he, he got that from his family, his grandpa. He was a third generation member being born in 1862 in Great Britain, which was unusual. Oh, wow. It means his dad was one, or his grandpa was one of the first ones to be, uh, baptized. And his grandpa was the leader of an anti-Mormon mob that was coming in to kick the missionaries out. They'd heard what they were up to. They, they didn't want 'em in there. And there was something about the missionaries dignity, and just the way they comported themselves that touched him. And he ended up actually like leading them to safety and hiding them in his house.

Speaker 2 00:20:53 And while he was hiding them in his house and telling the mob, no, they're not here, uh, they ran off somewhere else. He heard the message and was touched and became a lifelong, very faithful, very faithful member. And so there was bravery in his family. There was absolute bravery in his family. And there is a story that, and this is one that he never really told. He talked about it in his journal. We know about it 'cause his son told it. But he would talk about it every once in a while. And it was the story of his baptism. And, and there was, uh, anti-Mormon sentiment back then was pretty strong. And so you could not baptize during the day. You couldn't go to the river because people would come and they'd just make it a miserable experience. I mean, they would just come and they would jeer, and they would, they would make life miserable for you.

Speaker 2 00:21:37 So what they would do is they would go to the river after dark, and they would, somebody would go walk around the town a half hour before to make sure that there weren't people walking around. When the town seemed quiet and safe, the crowd would hurry to the river, then they'd do the baptism. When they got there on that night, he was 11 years old. He didn't get baptized at eight, he got baptized at 11. And when his father stepped into the river, there was all of a sudden, this just unearthly shriek. The way he talks about it was just like, it was worse than anything you've ever heard. Just like a yell whale just, I mean, just made their hair on the back of their, their neck stand up. And his father turned to him, and his father said, he asked, well, this is in his words, father asked me if I was too frightened to be baptized. And I answered by directly stepping into the water. And as soon as he stepped into the water, the noise ceased. There was no more noise. And they went and they did the baptism.

Speaker 1 00:22:40 And Wow. So they didn't know where this sound was coming from? No,

Speaker 2 00:22:42 They had no idea. They had no idea. Cow and James e Talmage was a, he was, he had a scientific mind as a kid. He never would speculate what it was. If he didn't know what something was, he wouldn't try to like come up with a theory about what it was. They just, so, like, he would never speculate about it. He would just tell the story flat. But what I love about that story is that 11-year-old boy, you think of these deacons last week that were, uh, set apart, the 11-year-old set apart his deacons. He was that age. And, uh, even with that noise, he stepped into the water. It's dark. And so I love, I absolutely love that about him.

Speaker 1 00:23:15 Yeah. Wow. And, and, and one thing I'm, I didn't know I didn't, I mean, technically James E Talmage was British then. Oh, yeah. He was. Wow. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:23:24 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:23:25 And the third generation, which, so his grandfather after joining the church didn't, didn't come to Zion per se, right? No.

Speaker 2 00:23:30 No. And his father, his father did with James E Talmage, when James E Talmage was a teenager. Mm. He did. So, but his father, yeah, his father was a grown man, and they were still living, working in, in Great Britain. They had branches there, and

Speaker 1 00:23:44 Wow. Yeah. So do, do you know if, did James Z Town have much of a English accent, uh, as in his adult life? Or did that wear off?

Speaker 2 00:23:51 That's an excellent question. And I don't know. I don't know. Oh,

Speaker 1 00:23:53 That's interesting. Yeah. I just don't think of him as a, as English, so That's awesome.

Speaker 2 00:23:58 Yeah. So he was British, and, and so the next day they asked people around town, Hey, did you hear that noise last night? And nobody had heard it. Nobody had heard it. Wow. And so that's the end. You're kind of an interesting

Speaker 1 00:24:09 Story. Interesting. Yeah. Just some, uh, maybe some spiritual warfare going on there. The, the demons were not, uh, happy of what was happening. So not

Speaker 2 00:24:17 Happy. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:24:18 Wow. So tell me about this, uh, school master that hated the church.

Speaker 2 00:24:22 Okay, so yeah. So he went to the Hungerford National School in the west country of England. And he was young, and his school master hated the church, just absolutely hated and would bring it up all the time in school. And so, James E Talmage, he was not one to ever back down from anything, even as a young, as a young man. I mean, he wasn't disrespectful or anything, but he would challenge the, uh, school master. And since they did corporal punishment back there, he got beat all the time by a school master. As a matter of fact, he always referred to that school as the place where I received so many thrashings. That's how he referred to that school. But what I love about it is, one, he had the courage to stand up for his convictions, but the rest of the story just makes me love James E Talmage, and actually his old teacher as well.

Speaker 2 00:25:11 So when he was an adult, he was quite famous in the sci, the scientific community. And he would go over to England all the time. And when he did, he always visited that school master. He would never go over to England without visiting that school master. And the school master was really, really proud of him, just super proud of him, especially because of his scientific achievements. He'd, he'd bring James E Talmage to the school to visit the children. He'd, he'd introduce him to his friends, and he would never understand how such a good scientist could come from that church, that he never really changed <laugh>. Like he never, he, he just didn't believe that he thought this was a one off. But James E Talmage had such compassion and such love for people that he would visit him every single time. And they, they had a great relationship.

Speaker 1 00:26:03 Wow. That's awesome. That's really cool. And then, uh, a college friend, uh, tell me that story. Yeah. Okay.

Speaker 2 00:26:09 So this was later, this was when he was in college, college. He went to, I don't know how to pronounce it, Lehigh in Pennsylvania. It's still a college, but he went over there and then went to Johns Hopkins. And it was a real libertine type place. Uh, there's a lot of well to do, and like the upper echelon, the kids of the upper echelon. But man, they were, they did not keep the law of chastity. And they bragged about it. And they were, it was a lot like, I guess, young people nowadays, you know what I mean? Like

Speaker 1 00:26:39 A party school, right. It was

Speaker 2 00:26:40 Kind of the party school. Yeah, absolutely. It was kind of the, the party school. And there was one, one person, and James e Talmage liked them all. He really did. He was disturbed. He was constantly disturbed. But he liked, he liked them all and they liked him. They genuinely liked him. And there was one student named William that would tease James all the time for being, you know, old fashioned and a prude. And he would always try to bait, he

would always try to bait him into arguments about morality. And eventually, uh, James e Talmage hadn't had, had enough. And he says, alright, William said, James, let us assume for the moment, you are right. And there is no God and no hereafter. And suppose we were both to die tonight, which one of us would've lived the fuller life. And, uh, William answered, oh, I suppose people would say you had, but I prefer the present enjoyment rather than whatever great funeral oration you're gonna have.

Speaker 2 00:27:31 And then, uh, Jamesy Thomas was like, no, fair enough, fair enough. Now, for the sake of argument, let us assume that I am right. And all of us will have to account for our actions before God again. We suppose we both died tonight. Now, which of us has the advantage? And William, the way he describes it, he just took it in with the same sort of detachment, and then all of a sudden he blanched and his face went white. He kinda looked scared, and he whispered, my God, he whispered, may it not be so, and then the conversation just sort of resumed and changed to other topics. But William never, never again tried debate James into a debate. And James never forgot the look on his face right there. He wasn't expecting it to land quite that well, but,

Speaker 1 00:28:12 Wow. Interesting. So, I mean, in those developmental years, or, or those young adult years, I mean, he, he faced some opposition, right? Like it wasn't, uh, and, and, and that he had to be brave, but also had moments of, of compassion As he <laugh>, he leaned in and, uh, called people to repentance, called

Speaker 2 00:28:29 People in repentance. And the best, nice, nicest way possible that they really like. I mean, it struck him. You, you could tell. So

Speaker 1 00:28:35 Yeah, love it. All right, where do we go from here?

Speaker 2 00:28:38 So he was a lecturer at a very early age. Like he would lecture around the territory about science. And he had, so one of the things I learned from James e Talmage is that just do it. And it's not always gonna be great at the beginning, but when you're starting a new skill or new leadership, or you just got called to something that you're overwhelmed with, just get in there and just do it. People like it when you're, you're vulnerable. And they, they like to see you get better. And they like to see the lord's, they like to see the Lord in your life. The Lord building you up. There was a great story about when he was, he must have been 17 or 18. He was a protege of Carl g Maser at BYU at the Brigham Young Academy. And he would do these lectures at night, and it was hard to get people interested in science.

Speaker 2 00:29:28 And then he did one where he was, when he was 18, he was already al already doing, uh, lectures on science. And he tried to make it really, really interesting. And he was good. And the, the people that came really liked it, but not everybody would come. It just didn't seem like the most fun thing to do. But one night he was trying to show how you, if you explode oxygen and hydrogen, you can make H₂O. And so he is doing it in the glass cylinder and the glass cylinder bursts so suddenly and loudly, and with such force that all the lamps extinguished in the room, and the glass just shattered over the entire audience. One young lady was struck in the forehead by a piece of glass, and she fainted. And there were some other

injuries, but nothing too bad. I mean, everybody, nobody had to go to the hospital or anything. And the admin at the Butte Rham Young Academy apparently were really afraid that after that, nobody would dare come to one of his lectures. But the exact opposite happened. All of a sudden it became like the most popular thing to do. It'd be people had heard about that, and all of a sudden there were standing room clouds. Only everybody wanted to come to it.

Speaker 1 00:30:33 Wow. He's a good marketer for science there. Yeah, absolutely. Did you wanna see something explode? Yeah. That's awesome. And that was at, uh, Brigham Academy. That, and he was a professor at that time?

Speaker 2 00:30:43 He, well, yeah, he was a teacher. I don't know if he was, if he would've called himself a professor. 'cause this was actually before he went to Johns Hopkins. He was young.

Speaker 1 00:30:51 Oh, gotcha. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:30:52 He was, he was, oh, yeah, he

Speaker 1 00:30:53 Was 18. He said he was 18. That's right. Okay.

Speaker 2 00:30:55 So this, yeah, this was before. And then there's, there's another story about him when he is older. This is when he is president of the University of Utah. And he kept a pretty regular schedule. And he got home late one night, which was surprising to his family. But he came home just bloody and just covered in mud and grass. And, and they thought maybe he'd like fallen into a mo. I mean, they didn't know what happened. Maybe he was mugged or something, they didn't know. But what had actually happened is he, the bicycle with a chain just came into, was just invented. It, made bicycles a lot safer. And that became his regular mode of transportation. And he would ride all the way home from the University of Utah, except for one place where there was a plank, over a ditch. And he would get off and he would walk across the, the plank.

Speaker 2 00:31:43 But he felt comfortable enough riding his bicycle that he decided that he was just gonna go over it. No big deal. So he did, but he went a little too oblong, slid right off the, right off the plank into the ditch. And he was bruised. He's a little embarrassed. And he thought, okay, well, I'm not going home until I get over that plank. So he went and he tried it one more time, went into the ditch again, just did it over and over again. And he was not gonna, he was not gonna quit. And I don't know, he lost count on how many times or how long it took, but eventually he got over and just to make sure he'd learned the lesson, he went back and he did it three more times. And so that was how he problem solved. He just did it head on. He wasn't afraid of failure. He would just get up and do it again. He did say though, that he never went over that ditch without feeling a tinge of fear.

Speaker 1 00:32:38 Bet. And, and this is, I mean, just kind of reveal something of his character. 'cause they see him as such an accomplished scientist that it probably took some, some resilience to get there. Right. Oh, to keep trying and messing up and, you know, moving forward.

Speaker 2 00:32:52 Absolutely. A good way to think about him, and I don't know that there's any spiritual lesson to get from this, but I do think it's fascinating, is he was almost like an Indiana Jones of the Utah Territory. So a lot of his scientific stuff was just doing expeditions out into where people hadn't gone. So he would just have like four pack animals, some students, some other teachers, and they would just head off into the Utah desert and look for stuff like they were, I mean, they weren't the first person to go down the Grand Canyon, but they went down the north face of the Grand Canyon when not very many people had and explored down there. And it actually became, well, let me start earlier actually. This is actually, there is actually a spiritual lesson to be learned here. So when he was sent, he asked Carl g Mazer if he could go east and just if it would be a good idea, and they said, well, you should go talk to John Taylor.

Speaker 2 00:33:41 And they decided to just treat it as a mission and set him apart as if what he was doing was a mission. And Wilfred Woodruff set him apart. And he said something surprising that I don't know that I would've trusted, but he said, when you go over there, get what you have to do, and come right back to Utah, do not get extra diplomas and honors, come back to Utah. And then they promised everything will come when you come back. And it's absolutely true. He found this, this type of mineral in the capital reef area, and he would just start sending it to museums all over the world. And it was a really like, cherished thing, like they were, it was some museums like prize possession. And that's one of the ways that he got to know so many, so many scientists around the world.

Speaker 2 00:34:31 And he was able to trade that, those rocks for stuff from, you know, Europe. So Utah all of a sudden got all these amazing things here. And he never would have received the honors he did if he had stayed east or gone to the continent, because he would've been one of many, he would've done very well. He would've done very well. Yeah. But coming back to Utah and just going out with pack animals and finding stuff, all of a sudden he became like a real celebrity in the science world. Like they invited him to the Royal Society, Royal Scientific Society of Edinburgh. I think I got that name wrong, but which was normally somebody that lived in America, couldn't do. But they, they pulled some strings and he didn't ask to be a part of it. They were just, they loved him so much and they were so impressed with the stuff they were bringing. All these scientific societies from Utah or from Europe, were inviting him to be in these just amazing, amazing societies. And so Wilfred RedR was really prophetic when he said that he never would've become the man he was, if he'd have stayed there searching for that, it all came to him just by being here and being him.

Speaker 1 00:35:40 Yeah. Yeah. There's definitely work for him to do here, <laugh>. Yeah. And to have the influence there. That's awesome. Any other scientific exploits? He, he had,

Speaker 2 00:35:49 I mean, the first thing, the first thing that really brought him notoriety was he got a microscope. He bought a microscope when it was first coming out and would start just looking at everything. But the one thing that really got him noticed was brine shrimp. He put brine shrimp on microscopes, and then he'd send it to other microscope enthusiasts all around the world, <laugh>. And so his first big thing that he got was the Royal Microscopic Society. They asked him to join. And back then the scientific societies were a big deal. I was trying to think of anything that was as big a deal now that would be as impressive. And I actually couldn't,

I mean, it, I have a story later on where people reacted to him being in those societies. And I don't know that there's anything nowadays that would, that would cause quite the reaction. I mean, it was, it was like all of a sudden somebody is just like, Hey, do you wanna be a member of Congress? No, you don't have to. You don't have to run for it. Just come on and be in Congress. It'd be something like that. You know what I mean? Okay. Come, come join the royal family. Almost is, is what it was looked on. I mean, that people loved those scientific societies back then.

Speaker 1 00:36:55 Wow. Interesting. That's awesome. Well, should we, uh, move on to, let's see, compassion mixed with bravery. Before we were talking about bravery mixed with compassion, but

Speaker 2 00:37:04 Yeah, absolutely. And this is actually, this is, I've, this story I had more re I've had more response to than any other story. Like, like this is what, this was the first time I told a story that people, like, just people that weren't interested in my, in my Twitter feed. Absolutely. Just, you know what I mean? They were still sharing it. It got shared like crazy. It got more likes at anything since you guys might have heard this. It's, it's been talked about a couple of times in general conference once by Elder Wlan and once fairly, like in the last five or six years, and I completely forgot about it. So in 1892, Utah was hit with the theory theory epidemic, and people were dying like crazy. The Release Society found a non-member family near death, and people didn't really know him, so they stumbled on him, and then they couldn't get anybody to help because people were scared that, you know, especially if you had a family, you didn't wanna go and get diptheria and then pass it on to your kids, or you die yourself.

Speaker 2 00:38:03 And so they couldn't find anybody to help. Now, James E Talmage was a young father at this time. He was just starting to get known in the scientific community. And when he heard about it, he absolutely, he just rushed there, no question asked. He was there. And what he found was absolutely horrible. One child, a 2-year-old, laid dead on her bed, and then a, a boy of 10 and a girl of five riving in agony. And there was a 13-year-old who was improving, but she was still feeble. She couldn't do anything. And the mom and dad were just, just dazed and just, just just dazed with grief and fatigue. And the disease had been there long enough that the house was just in a state of, of utter filth. And so after administering to the children, James, he spent the rest of the day cleaning.

Speaker 2 00:38:48 He swept and he disinfected, and he, he burned all the filthy rags and bathed the children. And the release society had brought clothes. And so he was able to put them in, in clean clothes. And, and the next morning when he returned, he found out that the 10-year-old boy had died during the night. And the little girl of five was in her last ago. He took her in his arms and he did his best to comfort her. And then this is what he wrote in his journal. She clung to my neck off times coughing bloody mucus on my face and clothing. And her throat had about it, the stench of ification, yet I could not put her down during the last half hour, immediately preceding her death, I walked the floor with a little creature in my arms. She died in agony at 10:00 AM Now, because of the plague bodies were required to be buried immediately.

Speaker 2 00:39:33 And so they were buried in a single grave. And he said the grief of the parents and the surviving sister were absolutely pitiful to behold. And James, he gave a brief graveside sermon, and the bishop was there too. And he dedicated the grave and he actually got that theory. James e Talmage got that theory. So he had to go home and be quarantined for a week. But he survived. I mean, of course he survived, but like that right there is, I mean, how many people, I mean, as a father, you know what I mean? I, I don't know. That's the kind of, that's the kind of bravery and compassion that I don't know. I mean, that's just, that's the man I want to be, and I hope I would be if that ever happened.

Speaker 1 00:40:12 Oh, yeah. And, and again, it's just these little, these hidden stories that build upon these men that now look like, you know, they, they became apostles Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> of, of Jesus Christ, you know, which is quite a title and a tough platform to stand on, but you know, God is, is working in him, just like we think of the stories of Joseph Smith's life. Right. All of these apostles had these experiences, just like we all do in our life. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that sanctifies us as and makes us able to stand in these calling and serve Absolutely. And lead any other stories of compassion mixed with bravery, or is that the,

Speaker 2 00:40:46 That's the big one right there. It's, I mean, yeah. Yeah. I mean, that's the big one right there. And that's, that's one of my top favorite stories for many apostle ever. I mean, it just, something about that it find so touching and just, yeah. Just powerful.

Speaker 1 00:40:59 Yeah. All right. How about, uh, the Lord calls you to be you. Okay. That manifests in the life of James z Dage. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:41:05 So when he was an apostle, he was called to be, uh, the mission president of Great Britain, and he succeeded. David O. McKay was the one right before him. Like, there was a lot of, like, if you were called to England, you an apostle and a really cool, you know, just an amazing apostle was gonna be your mission president. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And when he came to Great Britain, it was the anti-Mormon sentiment was at its highest ever. I mean, it was just the way that newspapers knew they could sell a paper was they would, they would write a headline. This is an actual headline, Mormon Mysteries unveiled a girl's awful revelations. And they would put that on the paper and it would sell. I mean, it would absolutely sell. Are you

Speaker 1 00:41:48 Saying fake news existed back then? This

Speaker 2 00:41:50 Is <laugh>? Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. It did. And in London, on the West end, one of the most popular plays was a play called Eve and the Elders. Oh, wow. Yeah. I actually tried to find the play to see if it was maybe online or maybe on Google Books or something. I couldn't find it, but it was quite popular at the time. And I don't know anything about it except that the elders are members. And Eve, of course, is she's in a lot of danger. And so at that time, there was very little missionary work was very hard to do because everybody just thought the Mormons were absolute trouble. And so, James e Talmage, I think the Lord, a lot of the things that happened earlier in his life were preparing him for just this moment, for just this moment. So he would go to a hostile newspaper to speak with the editor, and when he would go

to the front desk, he would offer his calling card, and whoever was the clerk or whatever would go back, come back, and they'd be like, uh, regretfully, the elder's schedule is so full, he couldn't possibly find time to visit.

Speaker 2 00:42:51 So Elder Talmage expected this. And he would say, oh, I, sorry, I just forgot something. He would write down on his card, he would write F-R-S-E-F-R-M-S and FRGS, and that was the, the fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the fellow of the Royal Microscopic Society, and the fellow of the Royal Geological Society, <laugh>. And the clerk knew exactly what the, everybody knew what those were just by the initials. And the clerk would look at it, look back at him, and be like, I'll be right back. <laugh>. He would go and he'd be like, oh, they would love to see you. He may not today. Can you come back tomorrow? Or they'd see him right then. I mean, everything would just change what I said earlier about those societies. Like they were as respected as anything. As a matter of fact, around that time, the Prince of Wales was gonna be inducted into the fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Speaker 2 00:43:47 And that was like the best thing for the Prince. I mean, the Prince was honored for that. Wow. And so that's what it meant. And so, so once he would talk to the editor, and everybody that talked to James e Talmage absolutely loved him, absolutely loved him. Once he would talk to James E Talmage, all of a sudden they just, they didn't have the taste for putting that in. And so he would just go to newspaper to newspaper and do that. And then every once in a while, a story like that would come, and James E Talmage was friends with the editor. He goes, do you mind if I write a rebuttal? And he would write this rebuttal and just anti-Mormon in the newspapers just sort of went away. It just went away.

Speaker 1 00:44:23 Hmm.

Speaker 2 00:44:23 Wow. So nobody else could have done that. That was the one thing that, I mean, he was probably the one man on earth at that time who could have done that. Yeah. And I do think, like in leadership, like there are things you can do that nobody else can do. Like, you don't have to be the bishop before you who is super cool. You don't have to worry about being him like the Lord called you to be you.

Speaker 1 00:44:42 Yeah. And there, I just think of, you know, the diplomatic efforts of different members of the church, whether they're an official calling or maybe they're a politician or somebody who's well respected in a business community, you know, they can, there's stories of those people reaching out and that those types of things happen in smaller communities as well. You know, maybe absolutely. The bishop can't get into that house, but you know what their next door neighbor, who's the executive secretary five years ago or whatever, like, they have a relationship there and maybe there's some connections that, or they can work on the, the established respect, the mutual respect in that relationship to reach out and help and, and build, restore the good name of the church in that area, or the good name of the bishop, or whatever it is. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:45:22 That's absolutely right. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:45:23 All right. We're winding down here with James down again. I mean, such an accomplished person. He deserves his own podcast, to be honest. But I, we know, Bryan, you're a little busy, so <laugh> <laugh>. So where, where do you want to go next as we wrap up?

Speaker 2 00:45:37 Well, okay, there's one quick story that's just a great story. And it's, I'm so glad I know it now. And it's, it's one of those church history stories that you just, you wish you knew it your whole life, but like I'd said earlier, like, there's just too many stories. Yeah. Uh, our church is just full of stories. Even the best stories are just gonna fall between the cracks. And so he was known as a workhorse, and he would work hour after hour, day after day, and he wouldn't do recreation. It just did not interest him. And this really concerned his family. It really concerned. The other members of the 12 Hebrew J Grant was constantly telling him, you gotta take up a sport, you gotta do some, you gotta do a sport

Speaker 1 00:46:14 Like recreation or something. <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:46:15 Yeah. Yeah. And Hebrew J Grant was really serious, really concerned. And he is like, I know just the thing for you, you were gonna love golf. I took up golf. It's my favorite thing. Yo. He was like, he was like, and James E Talmage was just like, no, no, thank you. I'm busy. I'm, I'm doing everything. And, and so eventually, uh, president Grant, well, he figured if, if he had just made one, one good shot, he'd be hooked for life. He was just sure of this <laugh>. And so eventually they reached the Compromise President Grant would teach him how to play golf. And after learning to make one good shot, if he decided to quit, president Grant would cease his request. And so, okay. So on that day, they get to the golf course and there's President Grant, there's Elder Talmage, there's several other general authorities. Didn't say who, but there was a bunch of other general authorities. And they met with Elder Talmage at Nibley Park for the first lesson. And after President Grant demonstrated how to grip the club and how to do a golf stroke, it was Elder Talmage's turn. And I don't know, do you play golf?

Speaker 1 00:47:12 I mean, yeah. I, couple times a year. I'm not like an avid golfer. Yeah. Okay.

Speaker 2 00:47:15 Very good. Well, I'm a new golfer. I played a few times, and I'm absolutely horrible. I'm absolutely horrible. And so, so, you know, like when you're starting out with golf, it's, you're either gonna hit it a few feet or you're gonna miss, I mean, it's, it's a, it's a tough sport. Elder Talmage hit the ball 200 yards, and it stayed in the fairway <laugh>, so,

Speaker 1 00:47:34 Oh my goodness.

Speaker 2 00:47:35 Yeah. You read about the spectators. This is how they wrote about it. They were just momentarily struck, dumb, and then they burst into applause. And President Grant shook his hand and said, congratulation, that is a shot you'll remember for the rest of your life. And Elder Talmage was like, you mean that was a fully satisfactory golf shot? And President Grant was like, oh, yeah, it certainly was. And then Elder Talmage said that I have fulfilled my part of the agreement. And President Grant said, you have, let's go down to the

clubhouse now. I'll help you select your first set of clubs. And Elder Talmage said, oh, thank you. If I have fulfilled my part of the agreement, then I shall call on you to live up to yours. I should like to get back to my office where I have a great deal of work. And he never played golf again. That was the last golf ball he ever shot.

Speaker 1 00:48:15 Oh my goodness. Mic drop moment. Just <laugh> as that'll do. Yeah. Oh my goodness. I love that. Isn't that great?

Speaker 2 00:48:21 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:48:21 Love that. Well, we ke we can't not talk about his effort in writing Jesus the Christ as, you know, just a hallmark effort accomplishment that, uh, he did. Tell us more about that.

Speaker 2 00:48:32 Yeah. So it was, took him seven months and five days, and he was at the Temple 24 7. I mean, he was a real workhorse. And that was one of the things that got people worried about him. That was why people were worried he was working so hard. But he just, he just felt like if he had a project, he was gonna see it through and he would just give it his all.

Speaker 1 00:48:54 And now it, uh, I mean, it's blessed so many lives and continues to bless the lives of missionaries as they read it on their missions. Oh, it's, I remember that's was my first interaction with it.

Speaker 2 00:49:03 It's absolute classic. Yeah. It's a very, that's a powerful book.

Speaker 1 00:49:06 It is. It's all right. What about his death?

Speaker 2 00:49:10 Well, so one of the things, and this is one of those moments where it's, he died, actually, you get to the end of their life and you realize he died at like 70. And you realize, oh, man, that, that feels young to me. That actually feels young to me, especially with Russell M. Nelson, just with all of his energy at 99, you know what I mean? And just what a blessing he is been, what a blessing he is. Been to the church at his age, but he died at 70 from a, from complications of a strep throat. And it was about 10 years before penicillin. Oh, wow. And yeah, so, and if it wasn't treated right away, it could be deadly. And so he finished a radio address and took his, one of his kids, maybe it was his son, maybe his daughter, maybe all of them out to get ice cream. And he had a cough that just would not, that would just not get better. And then the next day was Pioneer day. And so he couldn't go to the doctors because all the doctors were done, and he wasn't about to impose himself to any doctors, but then by the next day, it was just, it was too much. And he, uh, he passed away from it. Wow.

Speaker 1 00:50:12 And Don was the legend, right? Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:50:15 Absolutely. I mean, he was definitely, yeah, I mean, just an amazing, just an amazing man. So you read about these people, you read about these apostles, and then

you get to the end and you almost, you know, you feel like you know him a little bit and it's always touching at the end. It's always absolutely touching when you get to that.

Speaker 1 00:50:32 Yeah. Well, this is awesome, Bryan. This has been so informative and helpful and, uh, just exploring a little bit of the life of, of James Zt and obviously did, what's the name of the, his biography? Is it just the life of James E Talmage, or,

Speaker 2 00:50:45 It's the Talmage story, and I don't, I think it's on Kindle. I'm not a hundred percent sure about this. I think it's on Kindle. It might be out of, um, print. I got mine at a di or somewhere. It'll, it'll show up <laugh>, but it's definitely worth tracking down. It's a great book.

Speaker 1 00:51:00 Awesome. Is there any specific biography that isn't, that they're having a hard time finding, or,

Speaker 2 00:51:07 Oh, yeah, there are. There's actually quite a few. I would have, I've got a list of biographies that are like over a hundred bucks, you know what I mean? Because they're just Oh, yeah. Way out of print.

Speaker 1 00:51:17 You gotta save up for those. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:51:18 Exactly. Or some of them are at the BYU library. So eventually I'm gonna take a Saturday and come up and read as much as I can. <laugh>, I mean, just spend, spend the whole day just reading one of the biographies and taking all the notes when I get to that point when I run out of my biographies.

Speaker 1 00:51:33 But maybe take a break and go, uh, swing a golf club once. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:51:36 That's right. Yeah, go shoot at 200. Be

Speaker 1 00:51:39 Nice. No, that's cool. That's cool. Well, I would encourage people again, to go check out your account on X again. Any anywhere else you would, you would send them, or is that sort of the, that's

Speaker 2 00:51:49 All. I've got the spot. Yeah. That's all I've got. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:51:52 Cool. Well, we've talked offline a little bit. We're gonna figure it out. I'd love to have you on and, and sort of do this type of thing more and more. And it may not be every hundred and third apostle in, you know, that we've had in on the podcast feed, but we're gonna do some things on the YouTube channel, maybe share some things there on social media. So make sure that, uh, you're listening people subscribe to the, to leading Saints on YouTube, and we're gonna put some really cool stuff there. But I'd love to have you back on and, and explore more lives or just have you record on your own with, uh, you know, share some good stories as you do, as you share 'em on X. And, uh, maybe the next one we'll do is John W. Taylor. Yeah. Uh, which is obscure individual, but maybe t's John W. Taylor, who he was.

Speaker 2 00:52:35 Okay, so John W. Taylor was, uh, he was the son of John Taylor, the prophet, and his son, John W Taylor's son was Samuel Woolley Taylor, who wrote the Absent Minded Professor and Flubber. So the grandson of John Taylor wrote The Absent Minded Professor. And uh, that's so cool. He wrote a book about his dad, John W. Taylor. He was one of the apostles that was excommunicated for polygamy after the Manifesto. Wow. And it's so funny, and it is so like, like

Speaker 1 00:53:05 It gets doesn't expect me to say so funny. Well,

Speaker 2 00:53:07 It's the funniest, definitely the funniest Mormon history book ever, because he

Speaker 1 00:53:10 Was obviously a good comedy writer for his time. Right? Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:53:13 He was a very funny, Samuel Willie Taylor is a very funny writer, so he knew how to write, he knew how to write, that book reads so fast. But John W. Taylor was very, very, he was a character. He was very, very funny. And and you think because of the end it would be like dark and, you know what I mean? It'd just be like kind of a bummer. But he does something at the end that is so faith affirming and so courageous. I cannot wait to tell the story that he became one of my heroes. I mean, he really, well, I'll just tell this part of it. Yeah. He really became, like, he was a rock star at his time. Like, he was the kind of guy that like people would come to hear because he was really, everybody loved him. He was very friendly. He was very, very funny.

Speaker 2 00:53:55 And so when he got excommunicated, there was a real fear that he would try to bring people away. And some people came to him and asked him to, and he said, I will. This is Christ Church. I will never, I will never, how did he put it? Well, oh, we'll do it the next time. But anyways, he, he was somebody who loved people, and he really could have gone and started another movement, and he refused to do it because this was Christ Church. And he would never, he would never, never, never betray awesome. Betray that. But the way he does it, so I, the way I did it was not as, as powerful as when he does it, when he does it, it's just, it gives me chills. Yeah. But it, it really gives you an idea of what it was like to live in Utah in the early, late 18 hundreds and early 19 hundreds. And it's just one, one banger story after another.

Speaker 1 00:54:41 That's awesome. All right. Let's, uh, organize something and, and maybe, I don't know, I'm playing around with some new things in 2024, but maybe even do a, a fun live stream where people can join in and ask some questions or something. I don't know. We'll figure it out. I'll love that. Yeah. And, but I'd let, yeah, let's learn more about John W. Taylor and the, the highs and lows of, of his life and his apostleship. Okay. And again, if people wanna check out more X of the apostles, head on over to X and we'll link to it in the, in the show notes. It'd be awesome. So, Ryan, the question we ask people, as you know, you've, you've had an opportunity not only to study the lives of leaders, but to be a leader to yourself. And how has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ?

Speaker 2 00:55:18 Uh, I love that question. Being a leader helped me understand how dependent I was on the Savior when I had to give words of comfort or be aware enough that I could talk to either, you know, notice somebody new coming into church, or somebody that needed a kind word. I couldn't do that on my own. And before I was a leader, I think I would just sort of let the days go by. I mean, I would just, I wouldn't think much about it, but being a leader, I had to, I had to humble myself and go to the Savior and realize that I cannot do this without, without him.

Speaker 1 00:56:03 That concludes this episode of the Leading Saints podcast. Hey, listen, would you do me a favor? You know, everybody's got that friend who listens to a ton of podcasts and maybe they aren't aware of Leading Saints. So would you mind taking the link of this episode or another episode of Leading Saints and just texting it to that friend? You know who I'm talking about, the friend who always listens to podcasts and is always telling you about different podcasts? Well, it's your turn to tell that friend about Leading Saints. So share it. We'd also love to hear from you. If you have any perspective or thought on this episode, you can go to leading-saints.org and actually leave a comment on the, uh, episode page, or reach out to us at leading-saints.org/contact. Remember, go to leading-saints.org/fourteen to access the remarkable presentation by Anthony Sweat about ambiguity and doctrine.

Speaker 3 00:56:59 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.