



Helping Members Prepare for Temple Worship | An Interview with Mark Mathews

November 2019

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To see the details of when this was originally published, see the show notes. Enjoy this throwback episode. Hey, everyone. This is Kurt Frankel with the Leading Saints podcast. I welcome you.

If you're new to Leading Saints, this is a podcast where we talk all things leadership in the context of being a Latter day Saints because we want Latter day Saints to be better prepared to lead, And that's what's gonna happen. Now you can actually go to leading-saints.org, and

there's, thousands of articles there. You can put in some keyword terms and search through that article database and read a lot more content there. Obviously, subscribe to the podcast wherever you're listening to this and, jump in. It's good stuff.

Now in this episode, we talk with Mark Matthews. Now, Mark Matthews, if there is a reason needed, he is one of them as far as reasons to attend BYU Education Week. It is now a tradition in my life that every year in August, I register and attend at at the Provo Campus of Brigham Young University, BYU Education Week, and it is a phenomenal. Some of the content and information and knowledge that is gained there, I encourage you, regardless of where you are in the world, it is worth the trip to attend BYU Education Week. And one class that I never miss is Mark Matthews class.

Last year, he talked about the restoration of temple blessings and keys. And we did a past episode on that. I encourage you to check it out. We'll definitely link to it in the show notes. And so I figured, hey, why don't we make this a yearly thing with Mark Matthews and interview him again?

This year, he talked more in-depth about the temple, especially the principles that we can learn in the book of Moses. And I thought, you know, as I was sitting there thinking, I don't know how well we do as leaders to sometimes preparing individuals to go to the temple. And so I wanted to to ask Mark, who is actually currently serving as a bishop, you know, when you get somebody preparing for the temple coming into your your office, maybe they've, you know, gone through the temple prep class, the traditional class that's available. But what do you say to them as a leader? How do you better prepare them to experience the temple endowment and some of the related ordinances in order so it's a positive experience, that it's not a confusing experience, and that they walk out feeling, wow, I feel like I was closer or maybe even in the presence of God and why that would be important and and also discussing the the covenants that are made there and a better understanding what we can and cannot say or shouldn't say as it relates to the temple, and that's what we did.

So I went down to, Mark's office. He actually, has taught at BYU before, now teaches, seminary at Springville High School. So I went down to Springville. We sat in his office and, recorded this interview, which I think you'll find insightful and helpful with which has a lot of home run quotes, sir. So keep your pen and paper nearby for sure.

So here's my interview with Mark Matthews. Today, I'm, with a guest we've had before, Mark Matthews. How are you? Good. Thank you.

Awesome. Now, we spoke it was September, I believe, or August of last year, 2018, and and that was after you, presented at BYU Education Week, and I attended this year. And you're I'm in your your fanboy group. Alright? I'm there.

We're, like and I was happy to see that you had a larger room this time, so I didn't have, like, elbow old old ladies to get into the room.

Mark Mathews: And, they gave me the JSB, and I was a little nervous to be able to fill it, but I was, I was grateful.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. Marriott Center next year. It's gonna happen. So about that. So, the year per previous, which led into our first interview, people can check that out at leading.saints.org.

We you talked about just the restoration of the the temple and also keys, the the new and everlasting covenant, those things. And and this is sort of the the the next step into that. What what was the process that you went through to determine what you're going to speak on this past year?

Mark Mathews: Yeah. I mean, the what I realized last year is that the temple is just an exciting topic for a lot of people to understand that there's just a natural desire to understand it better. And oftentimes, you know, there's not a lot said about the temple and what goes on in the temple. And so there's kind of this this need, this desire, this hunger from Latter day Saints to understand it better. And I realized that the year before.

So I thought, what could I, like, teach about this year? I'd kind of already talked about the development and the restoration of temples. What could I talk about? And and the thought came to me that we could talk about the temple endowment instruction itself. Now you can't just talk about that.

You can't make that your topic. And so as I was pondering how we could what scriptural source we could look to, I I thought of the book of Moses from the Pearl of Great Price, which the visions of Moses cover a lot of the basic doctrines and principles and experience that we have in the Temple Endowment video. In fact, I really think the Temple Endowment video is to try and recreate that experience for us so that we, like Moses, can come up into the presence of God and have a vision of the plan of salvation, of the creation, the fall, the atonement, and those gospel principles and covenants that will bring us back to God's presence. And so as I thought about that, that's why I settled on that we would go through the early chapters of the book of Moses and and use that as kind of a a template to talk about those things that were instructed on in the temple.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. And I love the parallel you you drew there in the class that, you know, back in Moses' time, they didn't have a projector and a screen to and it was obviously much more magnificent to have this vision open up. But in essence, I mean, every time we go to the temple, we have a vision open up to us just, you know, even though they're we're using modern day technology for that to happen. And so we're having the same experience that Moses had. Right?

Mark Mathews: Yeah. Absolutely. I mean, a vision just means a visual revelation. And so a visual revelation, you know, guide to the scripture says that. So you have a watch a video, and if you watch it by the power of the Holy Ghost, then, yeah, it's a vision.

You've just watched something and learned it and taken that information in by the power of the Spirit. So for all intents and purposes, you're having a vision when you watch that video by the Spirit. And I really think that that's what they're trying to convey. I think that's what Joseph Smith was trying to do when he acted this out. He was trying to give the saints the same experience that he had had, the same experience that Moses had had, where they'd been brought up into the presence of God and learned these truths.

And so he wanted to invite us to have that same kind of experience, and the endowment allows us to do that.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. And now this process, what I wanna base this conversation and interview on is that, obviously, as leaders, we have the responsibility to serving as a bishop right now. Individuals come into your office and they're preparing for a temple. Maybe they're on the process of their mission papers and that's part of the steps of them going to the temple. And this can be kind of tricky for a lot of leaders who maybe they have a deep understanding of the temple, maybe they don't, maybe they're they're still getting there.

And so it can either be a very short to the point, well, let's go to the through the temple recommend questions. Do you have any questions about the temple and maybe, you know, take more of a practical approach? Well, this is sort of what you'll do and maybe, you know, there'll be some different clothing and whatnot, but it's still very vague. So you can lead someone to that first experience at the temple, and they're still sort of they're kinda caught off guard by it all and not really very much prepared, which obviously they'll have more opportunity to attend in the future. So I'm sort of curious with your your knowledge and expertise in in these in the study that you've done, how you go about truly preparing somebody for that temple experience and also encouraging those who've had it to appreciate it on a deeper level.

So where should we start with that that discussion? Where when someone walks in and begins that process, where do you start with them?

Mark Mathews: That's a great question. I when I was a young seminary teacher, Elder Bednar gave a talk about the learner. It's called Seek Learning by Faith. And in that, he says the most important learnings of life are caught, not taught. And that's really influenced me as as both a teacher and as a leader.

I I, you know, I'm tempted when somebody comes in to just spill my guts and just share everything I know about the temple, but I know that that can be really overwhelming, just like the temple endowment itself can be overwhelming, and a lot of that information won't stick. And so what I try to do instead is give them some resources that they can read and study on their own and process and think about and learn so that they can use that time to prepare and catch that information and discover it for themselves. And so I give them 2 resources. 1, I, a few years back, I wrote an article for Meridian Magazine called Understanding and Embracing the Temple Endowment, and it walks you through some basic things that I'd be happy to discuss here. And so I have him read that.

The other thing I have him read is this, this new information that Elder Bednar talked about 6 months ago in general conference. The church has a prepare for the temple portion of the Church of Jesus Christ, Latter day Saints, the the official church website, churchofjesuschrist.org, has this section called prepare for the temple. And it even specifically has a section on the endowment where it lists, you know, the covenants that we make, and and it's more and more clear and explicit than we've ever been in our temple instruction. So I think it's a really helpful resource. And so I I invite them to to read those 2 those 2 sources and and study.

And then I just ask them questions, and I and I try and just kind of feel out their their understanding and and try and help them focus on those things that I that I think will prepare them for the instruction.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. And and I wanna interject here that just like in each one of your courses at Education Week, you started with the same quote, I think, by president Benson and Eller Bednar, because the tricky part of this is as leaders or anybody, even if it were parents of somebody going through the temple, we feel like we're not supposed to talk about the temple and, we so we don't say much to on the side of being, you know, okay that we don't don't divulge too much. But how can we better understand what we can say about the temple?

Mark Mathews: No. I I think that's an excellent question. I I think in, in the past, just like you said, I I think the fear of saying too much has caused people to say almost nothing at all. And so a lot of people go to the temple endowment just totally unprepared. They the temple preparation courses of the church in the past have been geared to make sure a person is worthy.

And so that's the preparation. It's, you know, are you paying tithing? There's lessons on the word of wisdom. And and so the it's a general it's a general preparation to help people that have maybe come from some inactivity to prepare them and be worthy to enter the temple. And that primarily is what it's focused on.

There's very little instruction about what actually happens in the temple, and that's unfortunate. And because of that, people come away, and and sometimes their experience their first time in the temple is not a very good experience. And that is heartbreaking to me because I I want people to go in there and experience and have a powerful experience like it's intended to be. And so when they walk away and they say, well, that's, you know, strange, or they say that they don't wanna go back, that just breaks my heart. And so that's actually why I wrote that that original article about, understanding and embracing the temple endowment is because I I'd had students that were confused by the experience, and I wanted to kind of give them an overview.

But the the recent talk by Elder Bednar 6 months ago in general conference in, April 2019, I think, really opens up for us the ability to talk a lot more than we have in the past. And this additional resource I'm talking about, this prepare for the temple on the church's website, again, that just opens up the ability to talk about things that we haven't talked about. In that talk that Elder Bednar gave, he let me just quote from it. He says, many church members are unsure

about what appropriately can and cannot be said regarding the temple experience outside of the temple. President Ezra Taft Benson described why this uncertainty exists.

The temple is a sacred place, and the ordinances in the temple are of a sacred character, president Benson said. Because of its sacredness, we are sometimes reluctant to say anything about the temple to our children and grandchildren. As a consequence, many do not develop a real desire to go to the temple, or when they do go there, they do so without much background to prepare them for the obligations and covenants they enter into. I believe a proper understanding or background will immeasurably help prepare our youth for the temple and will foster within them a desire to seek their priesthood blessings just as Abraham sought his. And that that's president Benson's quote, and and that, you know, that's been my experience as well.

So then commenting on that, elder Bednar then adds this, very helpful guidelines. Two basic guidelines can help us achieve the proper understanding emphasized by president Benson. Guideline 1, because we love the Lord, we always should speak about his holy house with reverence. We should not disclose or describe the special symbols associated with the covenants we receive in sacred temple ceremonies, neither should we discuss the holy information that we specifically promise in the temple not to reveal. Guideline number 2, the temple is the house of the Lord.

Everything in the temple points us to our savior, Jesus Christ. We may discuss the basic purposes of and the doctrine and principles associated with the temple ordinances and covenants. End of quote. And so that just opens it up. In other words, what Elder Bednar is saying is there's some things we specifically covenant not to talk about, and we wanna be reverent about the other things, but but we can and should talk about those other things.

There's a lot of information that that is taught in the temple endowment, like I showed in in, my education week lessons, they are found in the book of Moses and the book of Abraham and then Genesis. And so those kinds of things we should talk about and we should prepare people to understand so they do have a better experience when they go there.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. And really, when you get into it, just like as you went through the the book of Moses, during your course, there is I mean, it's almost all there, really. I mean, it's amazing even a lot of the phrases word for word from from the temple that we hear. And so use the resources and use it as a guide and knowing that you can talk quite a bit about what what goes on there in an instructive and in a reverence manner.

Right? So so someone, is preparing for the temple and obviously, you don't want them to have a negative experience or a, you know, a an experience that maybe leaves them sort of in the a strange mode. Like, well, that was completely different than anything I've experienced. I'm not sure what to make of it. So you give them some resources like you mentioned.

And then for you, do you meet with them quite a bit, or do you sit down with them for for a good hour, or or how how's the general format that you take?

Mark Mathews: You know, it depends on the person. I like to give them those resources, and then I like to answer questions and ask questions about them. And, really, some of the main points that I make in that article that I wrote is what I want them to understand, and that is that the ultimate purpose of the temple endowment is to bring us into the presence of God. I think it's powerful to begin with that end, right? To start by talking about the end goal.

The end result is that we pass through the veil and we come into the celestial room of the temple, which represents the presence of God. And most have had the experience of going through a temple open house, and so they're familiar with the celestial room. And I just want them to understand that that that is the the end goal, is to come into the presence of God where we can commune with him and be close to him. Something that president Eyring said last general conference I was really inspired by, he's talked about his first time in the temple. And he said, in that moment, the first time he went through the temple, a clear impression came to me that I had been there before.

But then I heard a very soft voice. It was not my own. The softly spoken words were these, you've never been here before. You are remembering a moment before you were born. You were in a place like this.

And I think that basic understanding that we're trying to come back to the presence of God, that just like Adam and Eve were cast out of God's presence, so all of us are cast out of God's presence. We lived with God before, and the the temple invites us to come back into his presence here and now to prepare us for that future day when we will live with him again. And so I think beginning with helping them understand that, I think, is a key to helping them appreciate what the whole purpose is. You can get lost in a lot of details, but the end goal, the ultimate purpose of what the temple endowment is trying to accomplish is to bring us into God's presence.

Kurt Francom: And so what, as far as the the reasons or purposes of being that presence, I think we all wanna be there because we know we have a loving heavenly father, but why is that important to go through these exercises in our mortal, state?

Mark Mathews: You know what? President m Russell Ballard, his grandfather, Melvin j Ballard, had an experience where he was on a mission and he had a vision where he was told that he had this great privilege and he was going to be able to meet someone. And he brought he was brought into this room as this throne room, and seated on the throne was what he said the most glorious being he'd ever beheld, and he recognized that it was Jesus Christ. And then he embraced the Lord, and he was blessed by the Lord. In his reaction to that, he said, oh, if I could live a, you know, a 1000 years, I would do anything to return back to that presence and experience what I did there.

Well, I think the temple endowment is trying to give us that same experience, that taste of heaven that will be an anchor to our souls in all the trials and the troubles of life that once we've been to the presence of God, we know what it is. We know why it's worth it. We've had that

taste of heaven, and so it draws us to return back to our father in heaven. It's that taste of home. You know, we're strangers here on earth.

We miss our heavenly home. And the temple endowment, the celestial room allows us to get a taste of that again, like president Eyring shares, where we feel like we've been here before. This is our home. This is where we belong. And so then we walk out into the world, and we'll do anything we can to keep those covenants so that we can return to that presence and experience that again.

That, I think, is kind of the purpose, to give us a taste of heaven here and now to, to invite us, to to prepare for that in the future. Yeah.

Kurt Francom: I appreciate that. Like, starting with that perspective and realizing the purpose of of the temple is to help us return to that the presence of our our father in heaven. Because a lot of times, it can feel very like, well, you're going to the temple so that you can go on a mission. Right? And ensure that's part of the process, but there's much higher purpose than to by starting with that, it really brings home the reverence of this experience they're about to have.

Mark Mathews: Absolutely. And I help them understand that, look, there there are times in your life you're gonna wanna be close to your heavenly father. There's gonna be times when trials or or death, hardships in your family and in your life are gonna make you want to draw closer to him. Well, that's the purpose of the temple. The purpose of it is for us to come into his presence, and there we can commune with him in a way that we can't commune with him anywhere else.

And we can and we can send those petitions. We can put those names on the prayer roll. We can pray, in special prayers, and we can ultimately commune with him in his presence in that celestial room. And so understanding that, I think people naturally know there are times in their life they wanna be close to the Lord. They need to be close to the Lord Yeah.

And help them understand. That's the purpose of the temple endowment. One of the chief purposes is give us that very opportunity.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. Anything else as far as of articulating that point to those that are preparing for the temple? Any scripture quote or anything that we've missed before we we move on?

Mark Mathews: Well, yeah. I mean, that kind of becomes the beginning because then what I really want them to understand next is if you wanna come into the presence of God, you can't just do that straight from off the street. Yeah. You've gotta prepare yourself, and that's what the temple endowment is all about. Through ritual and through covenant and through instruction, we're prepared to come into God's presence.

One of the, you know, key verses of scripture repeated over and over again is that no unclean thing can come into God's presence. And so the purpose of being washed and anointed and clothed, the purpose of making these covenants, the purpose of receiving this instruction is so that we are properly prepared so that we can pass through that veil and come into his presence. And so once they understand that that's kind of the end goal, then it prepares us to to give

instruction and explain these other things that they're going to see in the temple and experience in the temple.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. Yeah. That's powerful. So what what would be the next point or focus that that you definitely drilled down on?

Mark Mathews: Well, yeah. So the next thing I would say is to prepare ourselves to be worthy and clean in the presence of God. There are rituals that we go through, ordinances that we participate in, and those are ancient in nature. I'd take somebody to Exodus chapter 40. Exodus 40, of course, explains.

I'll quote from it. It says, and thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons under the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments and anoint him, and sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And so there was a 3 step ritual that they would go through anciently before they could come into the holy place, which is the equivalent of or the most holy place, which is the equivalent of the celestial room in the temple today. They were washed, they were anointed, and they were clothed.

And the symbolism of that, I think, is pretty clear. We're washed to be clean. That's why you wash somebody is to be clean. No unclean thing can come into God's presence, so there's a ritualistic washing that we go through to cleanse us from the the blood of this generation as doctrine covenants section 88 verses 74 and 75 teach us. The next step is to be anointed.

The anointing with oil is an ancient way of consecrating or setting apart someone to be a special servant of God. You would anoint prophets, priests, and kings. Well, likewise, we're anointed to be special servants of God. Doctor and Covenants 109 talks about this, the blessings of the of the temple being poured out upon us. That's anointing symbolism.

And so when section 109 and 110 talk about, you know, pouring out blessings, that that's the symbolism of that anointing. And then finally, we're clothed in special temple clothing, which begins with the temple garment, but also special temple robes. I like to show people that I'm preparing the the great gospel art picture of Aaron wearing his his priestly robes. He's being anointed in that image. You see the tabernacle on one side of him.

You see the ark of the covenant there. He's about to go into the temple. He's been washed. He's being anointed, and he's clothed in those temple clothing. And and I invite him to take a good look at that, and I I explained to him, don't be surprised if in your temple experience you end up dressed in a similar way, because I think that's one of the surprising things about the temple is some of the temple clothing.

But help them understand this is an ancient tradition where you were clothed, and that symbolized being clothed in God's priesthood authority and power so that we can stand in his presence. Right? In Moses chapter 1, Moses is in the presence of God. He comes off the mountain. He he realizes that he if he wasn't clothed in God's power, if he wasn't transfigured, he wouldn't have been able to endure his presence.

Well, likewise, we're washed. We're anointed, we're clothed so that we're fully prepared, fully clothed with God's power and authority, cleansed, washed, and anointed so that we can stand in his presence. And that's kind of the the symbolism of that. And so that that would be the next thing I'd want somebody to understand so that they appreciate and understand those those rituals that are unique or unusual, something that they're not familiar with because most people don't know the Old Testament as well as we probably should.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. Right. Yeah. And and I love that that imagery that, like you said at the beginning, that the whole journey of this endowment of this process we're going through is to be in God's presence. And so the washing anointing may seem odd, but when we understand that we're preparing ourselves to enter the Lord's presence, then that's that's a big puzzle piece that fits into the path to return to him.

Mark Mathews: Exactly. Yeah. Exactly.

Kurt Francom: Now during the the your education week presentation, you you used I mean, it was the book of Moses that you're you're constantly referring to. And and it is I mean, that's like Moses's endowment experience. Right? And do you typically reference that as you go through and then use Moses sort of that that model that to help them show what they're about to experience?

Mark Mathews: Yeah. I do. So once I kinda help them understand that idea that you gotta be prepared. By the way, just quickly, the other thing that I invite him to understand is the is the covenants that they'll make.

Kurt Francom: Oh, okay.

Mark Mathews: And that's something that, again, we've been very shy about mentioning in the past. President Benson taught it in a BYU devotional. He listed them all, and they're now listed in that prepare for the temple church website. Is it listen, you know, obedience, sacrifice, gospel, law of chastity, consecration. We're being more clear about that.

There's even links where prophetic teaching. So I I try and help them understand that to be ready for God's presence, the Psalms say you've gotta have clean hands and a pure heart to ascend into the hill of the Lord. Well, clean hands, that's the ritualistic cleaning. Pure heart comes from keeping those covenants, making and keeping those covenants so that we're worthy and prepared to come into God's presence. But once we come into God's presence, just like Moses, we have this experience where we receive instruction.

And Moses, the book of Moses, really is our best instruction on that. I mean, that that's what that vision is. Moses is taken up into this holy mount. He sees God face to face, and God tells him, you're my son, and let me show you the works of my hands. And then he teaches him the plan of salvation from the perspective of the creation, the fall, and the atonement, and then teaches him some some further instruction about the aftermath of that.

But that that really is the the instruction we receive is about the plan of salvation, and and that is how it's presented in the temple today. And so, yeah, the the next key would be to study the book of Moses and be familiar with what God wanted Moses to understand about the plan of salvation and his place in it, and that would be the same basic instruction we're receiving in the temple in down as well.

Kurt Francom: So when you talk about the the covenants that are made there, and, generally, I mean, there's there's 5 main ones, right, that we we go through in that experience. Do do you really spend some time with with each one? And because a lot of these, like, I think you mentioned in your presentation that these aren't, like, new covenants that we weren't asked to keep before, but we're now sort of on a higher level making higher covenants to keep these in a in a more reverent way. Right? So how do you is there any anything we're missing as far as how you approach instructing and explaining these covenants that we make?

Mark Mathews: Why the first thing I do is just make sure that they've read carefully this information on the church's website because it lists them, and it even has links. If you, you know, click on the link, it'll take you to prophetic teachings about obedience, prophetic teachings about sacrifice. And so I I just ask them, make sure they have a a basic understanding of those ones. Maybe the the one, if I'm gonna focus on one, that I want them to understand it's consecration because that really is the ultimate covenant that we make to receive all of God's blessings. We give him all that we have.

It's an all for all deal is what elder Bruce c Hafen once said in a conference talk. We give God all that we have, and in return, he promises all that he has. And so helping them understand that that really is the ultimate purpose. That before we can come into God's presence, we've gotta consecrate ourselves, all that we are to him and his purposes.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. And I think you made reference to the law of consecration that this is something we sort of see as maybe this is a it is a law that was lived that will maybe be restored, but it's it's much broader than that and something that we are living right now. Right.

Mark Mathews: Absolutely. I think that's one of the, unfortunately, one of the big misunderstandings that many Latter day Saints have is they think the law of consecration, they just apply it specifically to one one application of it that we've come to call the united order, originally called the United Firm, where people consecrated their properties in Missouri and those kinds of things. And so because we're not living that application of it, people assume we're not living the law of consecration. And that's a misunderstanding. We should be living the law of consecration.

We're under covenant to live the law of consecration. And if we're willing to give the Lord all that we have, then we are living that law of consecration. What many people don't realize is that when they practiced this in Missouri, they were supposed to give whatever was extra, whatever was surplus. And, that was hard to measure. How do you know how much is surplus?

When I teach this to my students, I ask them, you know, how much of your last paycheck was You just couldn't even find any use for it, and you just wanted to give to the Lord, and they kinda laugh because everybody knows you get a paycheck, you're gonna spend everything.

Kurt Francom: Yeah.

Mark Mathews: And so really the purpose of the law of tithing wasn't to replace the law of consecration, as many people assume. The purpose of it was to standardize how much was extra, how much we were supposed to give to the Lord, and the answer is 10%. And so we're paying our tithing and we're, you know, giving generously of our time and our means, and we're paying a generous fast offering, and we're recognizing that we belong to the Lord and whatever he calls us to do, we're willing to do, and we're volunteering for church assignments and we're doing those things and we're living the law of consecration. That's what it looks like today. And I know all kinds of saints in my ward that are living the law of consecration.

I know all kinds of people who, at a moment's notice, if they know there's a need, somebody needs a blessing, somebody needs help moving, they're gonna drop everything and they're gonna go hell because they belong to the Lord and to his kingdom, and they're willing to serve. And that's what the law of consecration looks like. And so, absolutely, we are living it right now, but we sometimes don't recognize it because we we very narrowly interpret it as the united order. Yeah. And that's a misunderstanding.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. It's not necessarily consecrating our our paychecks, but it's consecrating our hearts so that we're the type of people who are have been have consecrated everything to to the lord and to his kingdom. Yeah.

Mark Mathews: Well, even those that, you know, consecrated in Missouri their their paycheck, so to speak, they would then keep whatever they needed. Yeah. The only thing that belonged to the to the church afterwards was whatever was extra. And so sometimes that meant nothing. Maybe all you have is there's no extra or maybe you need a little bit.

And so, yeah, giving, the law of tithing is act is actually not a lesser law at all. Yeah. It really it requires sacrifice of everybody. Yeah.

Kurt Francom: And it's interesting to see that just in a modern context of, you know, even in our callings like yourself, you don't necessarily miss work because you're the bishop, but you give what's left over. And there's some evenings here and there you can give. And on Sunday, there's some extra time you can give, you know, for this season. But a lot of people, there's some individuals who because their career or whatever, they're they're not in a position to serve as a bishop or because they're maybe traveling a lot or they just have a type of career that does that. And so maybe that extra isn't there, and there's no fault to them or or anybody else.

But it's interesting that that dynamic is still happening today. Yeah. Right?

Mark Mathews: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. As long as their desire in their heart is to serve the Lord and do whatever they can, then then that's what the law of consecration looks like. It's belonging to the Lord Yeah.

And devoting all that we have to it.

Kurt Francom: And now, obviously, each one of these covenants we make deserve their at least their own episode. But just to go through them, like, anything you you would add to the the law of or the covenant of obedience?

Mark Mathews: No. I think that was a Pretty straightforward. Very straightforward. Obedience, first law of heaven, we've gotta obey. And that's, you know, not not a popular doctrine, but it's an important one.

Sacrifice, I think we understand that well. It goes along with consecration that we're willing to make whatever sacrifice is required to to serve the Lord. The gospel, that's one that has sometimes been misunderstood. Recent changes in the temple have made clear that the law of the gospel refers to those that higher law that the Lord gives us in the New Testament. You know, if you if you wanna learn about the higher law, read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 through 7 and 3rd Nephi 12 through 14.

The law of chastity, that's become a more important one now than maybe ever before, that the law of chastity is sexual relations only between a man and a woman who are married. And then, of course, then there's the law of consecration like we've discussed. Yeah. So I just make sure I would want the people that I'm preparing and my students also to understand those basic laws because you're gonna make a covenant to keep them. So you better understand what they are if you're gonna make that that covenant to live them and obey them.

And so I'm really grateful again for the church's resource in in explicitly listing them and then giving, you know, quotes from prophets and apostles that that explain that and help you understand it.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. And and just taking a moment to help them sit with these with these, covenants that they're about to make long before they're in in the chairs in the temple because some I'm sure there's individuals that, well, I haven't had no to think this through. You know? I don't know. What am I really agreeing to?

And that can be sort of a negative experience. But when they've sat with it, they're not surprised when that next covenant comes up, then they can move forward with confidence knowing that maybe they don't understand it entirely, but they understand enough to to

Mark Mathews: commit. Absolutely. Yeah.

Kurt Francom: I don't know. And stop me if I'm jumping ahead in this part, but you you mentioned as far as the you know, obviously through the through the temple endowment, we experienced the plan of salvation. And you you spent a a whole class on this this concept of the

plan of of salvation, how we typically see it as, you know, we can all draw the the shapes and the squiggly line for the veil and the 3 kingdoms and and that's sort of the the plan of salvation. But how does that plan of salvation how how is it manifested through the temple in its purest form?

Mark Mathews: Yeah. So, the way the temple endowment teaches the plan of salvation is the same way the book of Mormon teaches the plan of salvation, the same way the book of Moses does, and that is by focusing not on these circles like we're familiar with, and And I have nothing against the circles. I I love to draw that. I I I want my students, my children to understand. It kinda gives you an overview, a map of where you've been and where you're going.

And so I think those circles can be very helpful. But underlying those circles are 3 pillar events. Elder McConkie and president Nelson have both referred to them as the the 3 pillars of the plan, and those three events are the creation, the fall, and the atonement. And that really is the way that the the Book of Mormon and the book of Moses and other places present the plan of salvation is by focusing on those three events. And I think we can see clearly why the last one's important, the atonement.

There would be no plan of salvation without the savior. I think that's pretty clear. But what many members don't understand is that there would've been no atonement of Jesus Christ if there wasn't a fall of Adam. And there couldn't have been a fall of Adam if there was no paradisiacal creation to fall from. And so these three events are are like dominoes.

They they set the stage and make make all those circles that we draw possible because of these three events. Creation sets the stage for the fall, fall sets the stage for the atonement, and and those three events working together is what move us through those circles and make the whole plan of salvation possible. And so, yeah, I mean, that that's not the way we sometimes see it, but it but it is important. I remember the the first time I I taught as a seminary teacher, I was being observed by a, by one of my administrators. And after I was done teaching the plan of salvation this way, he said, I've I've never heard, you know, in my whole life, I've never heard the plan of salvation presented this way.

And he's been a little bit critical. And I wasn't gonna be a smart aleck, but in my mind, I thought, well, that's the way it's presented in the temple. That's the way it's presented in the Book of Mormon. And so we ought to be more familiar with that. I like to draw the circles, and then I add 3 pillars underneath those circles representing creation, fall, and atonement to indicate this is what holds up all those circles.

It's what makes them all possible. It's what supports the whole plan of salvation are those three events, and that's how it's presented in the temple endowment as well. Yeah.

Kurt Francom: And then I appreciate that because we especially in seminary and teaching youth, we sort of focus so much on the circles. Right? And really, that's just the frosting on the cake. Like, deeper down, there are these pillars that that will manifest themselves throughout their mortal experience. Right?

And then they go to the temple, and they don't see the circles in the temple. I mean, I guess there are some circles and and whatnot here and there. But but to to realize that these are three pillars that are critical points in in our sanctification process to get us again, lead us back to the presence of god. Right?

Mark Mathews: Yeah. Absolutely. As a result, people can go through the temple endowment experience and not realize that they're being instructed on the plan of salvation because sometimes people don't think of creation and fall as being part of that. And so, like, okay. Well, I got some, you know, interesting information, but they don't get that the purpose of this is the same purpose for Moses.

It was God wants us to understand the plan of salvation. So he takes us into his presence, and he instructs us, and he teaches us creation, fall, and atonement and shows us our role in that plan, our place in that big eternal perspective, that big picture that he gives us in that experience, that instruction of the temple where we're taught from on high.

Kurt Francom: In the temple endowment experience, it's very obvious where the creation is, where the fall is. And maybe it's not overly obvious where the atonement is in all this. How would you how would you explain as far as where to look for the atonement in that whole experience?

Mark Mathews: I would invite people to look to the atonement as the result of the creation in the fall. What it makes clear in that instruction is that because they fall, they need a savior. Because we fall, we're going to experience physical and spiritual death, the dissolution of our relationships, the sorrows and pains of life. But what allows us to overcome all of that is the atonement of Jesus Christ. And so that is explicitly stated in that instruction, and also all the symbols point to that, that it's through the atonement of Christ that we're able to return to the presence of God.

The fall ends with us being cast out of the Garden of Eden, cast out of the presence of God, and there are angels set there so that we can't return at that time. The whole purpose of the temple endowment is to teach us what we have to do to come back to the presence of God, and all of that is made possible because of the atonement of Jesus Christ. He is what makes that path possible. He is the path. He is the way.

And as we follow him, as we make those covenants, as we live his gospel, we prepare ourselves to follow him back to the presence of God. Anything else about those three pillars that, be really necessary to emphasize or or discuss, sir, that come to mind? No. Nothing that I'd add. Just that they really are fundamental.

And and I think we we ought to do a a better job maybe of of studying and then thinking about them and really looking at the temple endowment through that perspective, that we're being instructed on the plan of salvation.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. Yeah. And really by instructing someone like you're gonna see these 3 pillars throughout this process and and keep an eye out for them. It sort of gives them some context to approach that experience

Mark Mathews: with. Right? Yeah. Exactly.

Kurt Francom: Awesome. What are we missing? I I mean there's so many angles. I'm I'm I'm not being fair by forcing you to cram these 4 days into, you know, an hour interview. But what what else what else were you worth mentioning from in this process of preparing and and helping members better understand that this temple experience?

Mark Mathews: Yeah. Well so, I mean, if you walk through the experience of creation, fallen atonement, it's not just instructive about those events themselves. Those events are trying to teach us something. And so, you know, Moses chapter 1, the main information that that teaches us is that we are children of God. Moses is brought into the presence of God, and he is taught that he is a son of God.

And that knowledge, I mean, that's that's huge. And, really, although maybe not explicitly, we learn that same thing through the temple endowment, that we are children of God, that we lived before, just like Adam had an existence before he was created as Adam. He lived as Michael. So all of us lived as premortal children of God. And just knowing that immediately begins to open our eyes to who we are and what we can become.

If we're children of God, then we can become like him. That is kind of the the main point of Moses 1. Well, then Moses 23 take us into the creation, and, it takes us through systematically. And most people are kind of familiar with the order of creation. You know, you you create the earth, and then you you later put, you know, plants there, and you put animals.

And but I think sometimes we miss the fact that that the crowning event of the creation isn't just the creation of man and woman. It's the creation of marriage that Adam and Eve aren't just created and then kind of incidentally put together. They are created for each other. That, symbolically, Eve is created out of Adam's rib, and that is very symbolic to teach us that she belongs at his side. She wasn't taken from his head to rule over him or from his foot to be ruled by him.

She's taken from his rib to indicate that she belongs at his side, that that he was incomplete without her. I mean, think about that symbolism. He was missing a rib until she came. Now that's not literal, but figuratively, it is true. He was missing something and she was missing something until they came together, and God created them to be married.

That's literally what that is supposed to teach us, is they were created to be married. And when they were separate and single and alone, they were incomplete. And so God created them for each other, sealed them together in eternal marriage because there was no death at that point, and he marries them. So that shows you kind of the high priority of marriage, that marriage is

fundamental to God's plan, that if we're gonna become like our heavenly parents, we've gotta get married like they're married. Right?

And so that really becomes kind of the main one of the main points of the creation. Well, then that takes you to the fall. And why did they fall? Well, there's a lot of reasons they fell, but Lehi lists the first one being so that they could have children. Adam fell that men might be.

In their created state, in the paradise of the Garden of Eden, they couldn't procreate. They couldn't have children, according to Lehi in 2nd Nephi chapter 2. And so they fell so that they could become parents. They gave up their Garden of Eden Paradise so that they could experience parenthood and family. And again, the creation and the fall show us how fundamental and how important marriage and family are to God's plan.

Well, through the fall, unfortunately, death comes to all of us, and death would dissolve all of those marriage and family relationships. And so one of the purposes of the atonement of Christ is not just to resurrect us and save us for our sins, but also to create the possibility for us to have those marriage and family relationships bound for all eternity. The atonement makes that possible. And so, yeah, the the creation, fall, and atonement when when properly understood aren't just events generally for us to understand about the plan of salvation, but very specifically, they give us instruction about how important marriage and family are to God's plan and how creation, fall, and atonement allow us to make those relationships, create those relationships, and keep those relationships for all eternity. Yeah.

I wrote an inside article about this called God's Plan for Families, came out in 2015, but that's exactly the point I try and make is that the creation, fallen atonement teach us all about this, and so does the the temple endowment in the book of Moses. Yeah.

Kurt Francom: And I appreciate this concept of putting marriage in the context of creation because that was sort of that that crowning moment of I didn't just create you just so there'd be some diversity and one's a woman, one's a man, like, let's mix it up a little bit. But mainly it's, you know, I created you 2 to be together and to covenant together, which you will in covenant with me, because I want you to be like me and and my eternal companion. Exactly. Right?

Mark Mathews: Exactly. No. Absolutely. It, it shows clearly that God is trying to help us become like him. And becoming like God doesn't just mean knowing all things and having all power.

It means being like our heavenly parents. Yeah. Eternal fathers and mothers. We couldn't do that in premortality, and so the earth was literally created so that we could get married and have families. And that's why it was created.

Okay? I had a religion professor at BYU once say that the earth is God's dating service for his children. Right? And that there really is, I mean, that that's kind of the point of the creation. They were created to be married, then they fell so they could have children, and the atonement allows us to keep those relationships forever.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. And it gives and I'm just thinking of people outside of our tradition, outside of our church can look at us and be like, why are you so creating such a fuss about marriage? Like, you know, but in reality, in the context of our doctrines, it's sacred because it is part of the creation that God gave us this thing, this ordinance, this, this matrimony so that we can become more like him. It's not just some fun exercise in society that we do because, this is what we do. But this is something that is a gift from God to us.

And so, yeah, we're going to have strong opinions about how it is perceived and used in the world. And I often think that, you know, why are we so upset with what or why do we have opinions with what governments do with marriage? Well, we owned it first. It was ours first, and then governments took it and are dictating how it's used, and it's not just for taxes and and those types of things. Like, it's something very sacred to us because it's part of

Mark Mathews: the creation. To the plan of salvation. In fact, you know, there's an old quote from United States by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles back in 1973 where it says of all the titles that God could ask us to call him, the one he prefers his father. That is very instructive. God is a father.

That is the essence of who he is. His wife is our heavenly mother. That is who they are, and what they're trying to do in this whole plan is to share that with us. And we live in a world where Satan tries to convince us that we would be better off following some alternative lifestyle to that plan of marriage and family, that we'd be better off, you know, separate and single and, you know, living that kinda lifestyle. And God's inviting us to have faith and confidence in his plan for families, that we'll have more happiness in marriage and family like he does than through any other relationship or association.

And, you know, I've I've found that true in my own life. You know, I had a lot of fun living as a single guy at BYU with my roommates. We had a lot of fun. Yeah. But that does not compare in any way with the joy that I experience through marriage and through family, through my wife, through my children, that, you know, coming home from work and having, you know, my little girl give me a hug and and my little boy run to see me and holding those children in my arms, and that that it creates a love and an experience that cannot be created in any other way.

And that's what God's trying to share with us.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. It's amazing. I've just for my father experience of you just never anticipate the love you have for your children. Like, the the level of love you have for these beings that you help create, that you're fostering, that you're guiding and encouraging. And it gives you a glimpse of that love your father has for you.

So therefore, you understand his role just that that much more. Right? And again, that'll come to everybody in some form, in some way in the eternities, but it's so clear as to why he wants us to go to the through these things, not just, you know, good boys and girls should get married and have kids. But it's like, no. I want you to experience what I experience with you so that you further understand how I feel about you.

Right? Yeah.

Mark Mathews: It's powerful. In fact, I had an experience I shared in Education Week that really taught me that profound way. I was I was at home one summer. My younger 2 had not been born yet, and my older 2 were at Yellowstone with their grandpa and grandma. And so it was me and my wife and and my daughter, Madeline, at home for a few days.

And after work, I'd come home, and and she was drawing on the like, drawing on the sidewalk and in the driveway. And and so I went out to play with her, and and she wanted me to to lay down so she could trace me, and she was tracing me on the driveway. And, you know, of course, she's 3 years old at the time, so her coordination is terrible, and my head is huge, and my hands are enormous, and she's just giggling and laughing, and I'm having this great time. And I sit up and I look at her, and I just look at her in the eyes, and I just feel this overwhelming feeling of how much I love this little girl. And it was just indescribable.

I just looked at her and I was just overwhelmed by how much I loved this little girl, so grateful that she was mine. And then I laid down, and I looked up into the sky, and it was like I had this, you know, unspoken conversation with with heavenly father. As I looked up into the sky, thoughts and impressions that came to my mind and heart by the spirit were these. Mark, what you just experienced is just a taste of the love that I have for all of my children and the joy that exists in heaven where families are forever. And that was really profound to me.

And, it really taught me, I think, what what the endowment with the plan of salvation is trying to communicate, this idea that that's what he's trying to share. But again, we've got all these voices in the world that tell us we're gonna have greater happiness in some other way or through some other relationship, some other association, but but I believe in that. And that's been my experience, and I trust in it. I trust in God's plan.

Kurt Francom: That's powerful. And, you know, talking about marriage and that creation process, which, again, the fall sort of leads into the the having children part of our existence. And, you know, I've done a lot of reading of Christians outside of our our theology, and they it's very traditional for them to see Adam and Eve as sort of these these individuals who didn't get it, and they made this horrible mistake at the fall. Right? But I feel like through our theology, we learned that, no, this is it was a very deliberate choice because they knew further happiness could be understood through the fall and them having children.

Is that is that a good fair way to look at it?

Mark Mathews: Absolutely. You know, it it's debatable how much Adam and Eve knew when they made that choice, but it clearly was the right choice. And you're right. Everybody else kind of assumes, oh, if it weren't for that, you know, Eve eating that fruit, we'd all be in this this tropical paradise. You know?

But that misses the point. They couldn't have had children, and we needed to fall so that we could have children. And those those trials and the tribulations and the difficulties of life, that's associated directly with with marriage and family. And I've come to realize that that having

marriage and family is in many ways what helps us get through those trials. You know, I think of some of the worst trials in my life as I've gone off to face them, knowing that I could come home to my family allowed me to face those things.

And so they do go hand in hand, but we can't experience the fall and the lessons that we need to learn in mortality in the Garden of Eden. We had to fall to obtain those things, and that included the ability to have children. And so even today, I mean, metaphorically, couples still have that same choice. They get married and there's that honeymoon stage and there's the 2 of them and they have to make that choice. Are we gonna have children?

Or do we have the faith to to step down from this experience of the garden of Eden of just the 2 of us and and face the trials and and things that come with making those sacrifices to have children? But but as we act in faith, I know I know we'll be blessed by it. And those children sometimes bring bring heartache, but they also bring the the greatest joy that we can experience. Yeah. Everything except bedtime.

Kurt Francom: I hate bedtime to be for the record. But, anyway, I love that that thought. And I'm just and you handle this always so well in your classes of of recognizing that there are individuals in this mortal experience that that will never marry or won't marry in this at this time or have kids at this time. And I just think about the experience of my wife. You know, we got married and we thought, let's shoot for 7 kids.

So let's have a big family go well. Well, it took about 5 or 6 years before we actually got pregnant. And then there's some miscarriage after that. And going through that process of, like, having God hold that back from us now that I look at my 7 year old, and it's just like, it's that love is even deeper because there was sort of this sanctifying struggle to get there. And I would imagine would you be that's maybe how others can look at it who those opportunities aren't necessarily there or they are married and and getting pregnant isn't as easy as is for others.

I mean, what message you have for them that really don't have that at this moment?

Mark Mathews: One of my favorite statements from the prophet Joseph Smith, he said at a funeral, all your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection provided you continue faithful by the vision of the almighty. I have seen it. And so, yeah, there there are plenty of people. I, you know, I have a a brother in that position. I I know many people who don't get to be married in this life or through unfortunate circumstances have a spouse that leaves them or or treats them, you know, inappropriately or people couples that are not able to have, you know, children as they would like.

But the great promise of the scriptures is if we'll trust in God and his plan, all those blessings will be made available to us eventually. We'll be able to have children in the resurrection, and that's the promise of doctrine covenants 132 verse 19, the continuation of the seeds. It's what doctrine covenants 131 refers to when it says we'll have increase in the next life. We'll be able to increase. We'll be able to have children.

So my advice to all of them would just be that the Lord is aware of them. The Lord knows their pain. And just like, you know, president Oakes recently said at general conference, trust in the Lord and trust in his plan that all this is gonna work out. Even if we don't understand how and when and where, it'll all work out. If we trust in the Lord, we'll have all the blessings of marriage and family, and those come to all the faithful sooner or later.

Eventually, everyone will enjoy them.

Kurt Francom: Yeah. It's powerful stuff. And I love this, like, as somebody's preparing, even those that are pre mission, like, helping them see that you're gonna going to go through and and, you know, receive your endowment that that's not the end. Like, this is that's just one more step towards the presence of God, and marriage is gonna play a big role in that. And so working that end of the discussion of, you know, marriage isn't just something we we like to do in temples because they're really big and pretty, and they make for great pictures.

Like, this is part of a gift that God's given us and, look forward to that. Right?

Mark Mathews: Yeah. Absolutely. I mean, that when you understand the, you know, the endowment, it prepares you to understand how important marriage and family are. You know, that that Adam and Eve were created for each other. And so, I mean, that's fundamental to the endowment is that idea that you've gotta find that person, and you gotta strive to to find them and marry them in the temple so you can enjoy those blessings.

And so, yeah, absolutely. The better we understand the plan of salvation, the better we'll understand that, yeah, it it doesn't end with getting endowed and going on a mission. That's just the beginning. We want to, ultimately be married in the temple, have these relationships sealed, and we wanna return frequently to the temple. I think it was president Nelson just last conference, doctor and covenants 109 makes the promise that when you leave the temple, you'll be armed with power from on high.

And President Nelson, last conference, he said, that happens every time. And so we want people to not just make this a one time event and and never go back. We wanna go back regularly so that every time we walk out of the temple armed with power from on high, we've come into the presence of God. We've we've received that instruction from the Lord, and we come back better prepared to to face the realities of the world, face the trials of life because we've been in the presence of God, and we've been instructed from on high. We've been taught, and we understand our role in the plan of salvation.

We understand that God's our father, and, we understand that the ultimate purpose is for us to become like him, and that happens through marriage and family. Yeah.

Kurt Francom: Awesome. What what else are we missing? Where's your where's your mind taking you

Mark Mathews: at this point? I guess one one quote that I I think is helpful to understand the temple endowment comes from the prophet Joseph Smith. He said, quote, reading the

experience of others or the revelation given to them can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven 5 minutes?

You would know more than you would by reading all that was ever written on the subject. And I've always liked that quote, but it wasn't until I was preparing for Education Week that I realized what Joseph Smith was really talking about, that he's talking specifically about the temple endowment. I always thought just kinda generally, you know, he'd had a lot of visions, and he's saying, you know, if you just got to see what I saw for 5 minutes, then you'd be able to know more. But that's exactly what Joseph Smith was trying to invite us to experience through the temple endowment. And it's interesting that the quote itself says through the ordinances of God.

It's through the temple ordinance that we're invited to gaze into heaven, not just for 5 minutes, but for a good, you know, hour where we gaze into heaven, and we see God, and we learn about him. We learn about the plan of salvation. We learn about our role in it. And it really is that through that experience that we can come forth taught and empowered to face the world. I think something I shared in Education Week, my I was skiing once with my brother, my first time to ever go skiing.

And, I was wearing goggles, and few people on the sea slope weren't wearing goggles. And so I asked him, I said, why you know, what's the importance of wearing goggles? And he could have said a lot of things to instruct me, but instead he just said, well, take them off. And I took them off and I was, you know, blinded by the the sunlight reflecting off the snow, and it was just, you know, blinding. I quickly put them back on.

And I reflected on that as just right when it happened, I thought, what a powerful way to teach. He could have explained a lot. He could have instructed and taught about glare, but nothing was more powerful than just having me take off the goggles and see for myself. Well, I really believe that that's what the Lord's trying to invite us to do with the temple endowment. It's one thing to read about it in the scriptures.

It's another thing to be taught it. It's another to have an experience where we are taken into the presence of God, and we get to gaze into heaven for a few minutes. And as we do that, if we invite the spirit to be with us, like we said at the beginning, it really can be a visionary experience for us. It's a visual revelation where what we're seeing is being confirmed by the power of the Holy Ghost, and we learn some of the greatest truths of eternity. We are taught from on high, and, that instruction can impact and bless every aspect of our life.

Kurt Francom: Awesome. Well, as we wrap up, the final question I have is just if you were in a room in front of several leaders that are they're tasked with helping individuals prepare for the temple, what final encouragement would

Mark Mathews: you give them? Final encouragement would I I would just say don't feel like you have to know everything and teach everything. As I said earlier, I think some of the greatest

learnings of life are caught, not taught, like elder Bednar said. So I would the first resource I would tell him to go is that that new resource the church has produced for preparing for the temple. Invite him to read that, invite him to study it, and then talk about talk about it with people.

Invite them to read the book of Moses and just really try and help them understand that to not get lost in the details. Too often, I think what makes the the temple endowment kind of a strange experience for some is they can't they can't look past some of the things that are unusual, some of the clothing that they wear, some of the, you know, the the symbols that take place there, they they can't see the forest for the trees. And so I would invite them to help people see the the forest, the big picture that we're being brought into the presence of God and we're being taught the plan of salvation. We're preparing to come into that presence through those rituals and through those covenants. And if we can take a step back and see that, then those details won't be as confusing to us because we'll be able to see that big picture.

And the better we can help people see that and experience that, I think the more powerful the temple endowment experience will be for people.

Kurt Francom: That concludes my interview with Mark Matthews. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. Please share this. If you know a a bishop or a parent who has a a youth that's preparing to go to the temple, this may be something that would be helpful for them to hear and understand and begin with some resources that they can, explore to better prepare these young people or anybody who's preparing to go to the temple and receive these sacred ordinances. I get so excited to go to the temple after I talk with Mark, and I hope you feel that excitement.

Go to the temple, enjoy it, and recognize how we are closer and oftentimes in the presence of god. And that's where that's our goal. That's where we're headed. And that concludes this throwback episode of the Leading Saints podcast. And remember, to get on the email newsletter list, simply go to leading.saints.org/14.

Gordon B. Hinckley: 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.