

*Saturday, April 7**Priesthood Meeting*

in all that we do. May we go forward and use our agency in accordance with correct principles, and give all that we do the time test, and relieve the brethren over us as much as we can within the line of prescribed procedure, within the line of those things which we have been taught and those things which we read in scripture, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER THORPE B. ISAACSON

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

President Clark, President McKay, my other beloved brethren of the General Authorities, and my dear brethren of the priesthood, truly this is nearly breathtaking, and I feel very humble in standing here tonight. I am sure we didn't expect this tonight, and I will be grateful if I can have an interest in your faith and prayers.

Yes, this is very much a humbling experience. I wish all of you could have the experience I am now having of looking over this vast audience. I have prayed to the Lord that when I should be called to occupy this position that he should not leave me. I have prayed to him first because I believe in prayer and, second, because I know I need the blessings of the Lord. I confess to you that without those blessings and his sustaining help and influence that I am nothing.

PROPHETS OF GOD

Surely one's testimony is strengthened as he comes here and listens to the brethren, listens to the words of the Lord given to us by his servants, yes, by prophets, seers, and revelators of God, our Eternal Father. We often hear them referred to as prophets, but I am wondering, members of the Church and particularly holders of the priesthood, if we give serious thought to the full meaning of that term. I recognize them as prophets of God, I know you do, but there are times, perhaps, when we pass that thought by lightly. Do you feel toward these brethren, prophets of the Lord, as you would had you known the prophets of old? I want to bear my testimony to you that I know they are prophets of the living God, I know they are inspired of our Father in Heaven in their calling. I hope you will have the same feeling burning in your hearts and accept their teachings, because they are inspired of our Father in Heaven. If, as members of the Church and particularly the Priesthood, we could only have the faith and the assurance and the conviction that these brethren are prophets, seers, and revelators, I believe we would pay more attention to what they tell us. Yes, spirituality is as essential to a man's soul as vitamins are to his body.

ADULT MEMBERS OF AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

As I look into this great congregation tonight, I have been thinking of the adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood, many of

them who have never been inside this building. If we could move this body of men from this building on out to the north and then fill it again and again with adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood in the Church, we could fill this building just as full as it is now, seven or eight times. You know, I'm one of those who believes the Lord loves these men. I believe their wives love them just as much as our wives love us, and their children love them as much as our children love us. If you had a wayward son, would you love him? Well, I only have one son, and I love him very much, and if he were a wayward son, I believe I would love him just the same. What makes you think that the Lord doesn't love his wayward sons?

NEED FOR GUIDANCE

Many of these men haven't the strength to get back into activity in the Church on their own power. Therefore, they do need your guidance, your encouragement and your patience; yes, I'd say they need you. They need someone to call on them, someone to come and see them, someone to encourage them and help them forsake those things that are keeping them out of the Church. The Lord has asked us to repent, he has asked all of us to repent, and then he said; If you truly repent and come unto me, and forsake those things that you're doing, or that you have done that you shouldn't have done, I will forgive you and remember them no more. But he wants us to truly repent. I believe these men would love that privilege. Well, you may say, they have the privilege. Why don't they take it? Well, they haven't the strength yet; until they can absorb some of the teachings of the Church and of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which they haven't had for a long time. They have perhaps become spiritually weak, because of habits that have kept them from church activity or for other reasons. They're not strong enough yet to put those things aside. And then you must remember that many of these boys and men have not been taught in their homes. As Bishop Wirthlin told us, they were not taught their many duties when they were young. I believe there are many fathers in the Church today, although I think they're not justified, that are leaving the teachings of their sons to you brethren entirely. If you fail, where are they going to get those teachings? Many adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood, after they come back into activity, are so delighted and so anxious that they put a great deal of enthusiasm in their work.

I talked to a brother, who is now a bishop but who was an adult member of the Aaronic Priesthood five or six years ago. I couldn't help but recognize the joy and the happiness that has come into that man's soul. I talked to his wife. She didn't have the ability nor the words to tell me how grateful they were. Yes, sometimes I think they're perhaps more grateful than some of the rest of us, after the spirit has touched their souls and they've accepted it.

WORKERS NEEDED

Someone has said, "He who knows books knows much, he who knows nature knows more, but he who knows God has reached the goal of human wisdom." Many of these men are brilliant men, in their own right, successful men in their own business, and they do know books, but they have perhaps neglected their knowledge of God. As leaders, I hope that you make yourselves acquainted with these thousands of adult members. It's too big a load for just two or three in each ward, or a dozen or so in each stake. There are many stakes in the Church that have four or five or six hundred, and some stakes with even seven or eight hundred adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood. Do you know how many men could be called to work with a group like that, a group of five or six hundred men? You can't preach to these men in Sacrament meetings, because they're not there. You don't get them into your priesthood quorum meetings because they don't come out. Therefore we must put the shotgun method away. We must now have individual contact and use the rifle method where we can go in and teach those men the principles of the gospel, the teachings that you and I were fortunate and blessed enough to have in our lives, but which many of them, not of their own fault, have been denied.

Oh, I hope that you'll somehow or other organize yourselves that you'll be able to touch at least one man. The Lord has said to us, "And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!"

FATHERS AND SONS

Now fathers, how close are you staying to your own sons, so that the group of adult members will not be increased? Do you fathers have close relationship with your own sons? Can your sons come to you and tell you all about their problems? Oh, I feel sorry for a boy that can't go to his dad and tell him all about his mistakes, all about his sorrows, and all about his problems. I think that that kind of relationship, in not being able to become close to a father, can only tend to bring that boy, perhaps, more delinquent than ever. I know boys will make mistakes, but oh, I feel that if they can go to their dads and talk over those mistakes with them, that those boys will be stronger and will not repeat their mistakes too many times, if they can come to their dads. Do you dare to go to bed at nights and not know where your sons are? Do you know whom they're with, or where they are, or do you know when they're coming home?

Awhile ago I was at a dinner party one night, and about eleven or eleven-thirty, the telephone rang and one of the men was called to the phone. We couldn't hear the conversation on both sides, but we could hear what he had to say. When he took his seat his wife said to him, "who was that calling?" He said, "Well that was our son John. He just called to tell us that he wouldn't be home at twelve o'clock." He told his father he was going to a waffle dinner after the show or the dance, I don't recall which it was, but he called to tell his father that he wouldn't be home until twelve-thirty or one o'clock. I turned to that man and said, "How old is your boy?" I thought he was a youngster calling up. He said, "He's twenty-three years old." I thought, what a marvelous relationship, what a marvelous thing that this boy would take the time and make the effort to call his father at a party to tell him that he would be a little later than usual.

Only that father said, "We can go home now tonight, and we don't need to worry about our children. They're going to be home at a certain time, or they're going to call us." Well, there isn't anything wrong in that kind of discipline. It isn't because it's strict discipline, it's because there is an understanding between father and son.

CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

And then, fathers, do your boys, at night, when they do come home, come into your bedroom and kiss you goodnight? Sometimes we have encouraged our daughters to do that with our wives, their mothers, but we fathers perhaps have not practised that with our own sons. What's wrong with a son coming into his dad's bedroom at night and sitting on the side of his bed and telling him how he liked his girl, or how the party was, or how they got along tonight. Don't you think if a boy will do that, don't you think he'll go into his own bedroom and kneel down and say his prayer after he has said goodnight to his dad? Don't you think if he is that close to his dad, that he can pour his heart out to you after he sometimes stubs his toe or makes a mistake? I don't like to see any boy or for that matter any man, live with his mistakes, because I think it eats the best out of him that is in him. Oh, I hope he can go to his father and tell his father about his problems, and about his mistakes and about his sorrows. There is no reason, fathers, why we can't be that close to our sons. Does your boy kiss you goodnight? Does your boy kiss you when you leave in the day, or when you leave for a trip? Or have we left that to our wives and our daughters? I'll confess that I was guilty of that for years, but I'm happy, so happy somehow or other that I've changed that in my own life. I'm glad that I can kiss my boy when he comes around me. I'm glad I can kiss him when I leave; I'm glad I can kiss him when I return. I don't want to be denied that beautiful blessing. I recommend to you fathers that you start living a little closer to your sons, that you love them, that

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you are not so strict with them that they can't come to you with anything.

Well, brothers, I didn't intend to say those things to you. May the Lord bless you that you may try and stay close to your sons, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Delta Phi Returned Missionary Chorus of the Brigham Young University joined the congregation in singing the hymn, "Now Let Us Rejoice," Richard P. Condie, Assistant Director of the Tabernacle Choir conducting.

ELDER J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren: It is again a great opportunity to face you and to try to speak to you for a few moments. You who bear the priesthood of God, there is in you, and the rest of us who bear this priesthood, the greatest power and force that there is in the world. That power and that force when understood and exercised, involves the control of all the elements that go to make up the universe; compared to that power and that control the H-bomb is a mere tiny firecracker.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

There are certain great principles that underlie our existence here on this planet and that are to be guiding principles for us. First there is the great principle of free agency given to us before the world was. Because of the exercise of that free agency, Satan rebelled and has since fought from the day of the great council in heaven until now, the plan of life and salvation that was submitted by the Son and adopted by the Father. The principle of free agency is fundamental to all of our freedom and all of our living.

One of the first commandments given to Adam relating to mortal life, perhaps the first that we have record of, was to multiply and replenish the earth. And behind that great principle and that commandment lies the eternity of the marriage covenant, the creation of bodies to tabernacle spirits that our Heavenly Father created, and to bring them to this earth so that they might have mortal bodies, live according to the commandments of God, that they might in their next estate begin and go on through all the eternities in eternal progression.

Another great principle to which I would like to call your attention is the command given to Adam when he left the Garden of Eden: "By the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread." This is the great law of work, and the Lord has given us no greater blessing, given us no commandment that will be more helpful in carrying out