

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

The Bishop is a hard man for a quiet man to follow.

I always enjoy the Bishop. He has such a marvelous enthusiasm, a wonderful testimony, and a wide experience, that he always stirs me. I thank him for his sermon tonight, and for its uplifting thought and word.

POWER OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Again, brethren, it is a great privilege to meet with you here in this Priesthood meeting. Again I am impressed with the power of the Priesthood. Again I am reminded that this is the greatest gathering of Priesthood—these gatherings of ours,—that can be held in the world. Greatest because of the great number of men who come together with one thought, one allegiance, one Priesthood. Greatest, because in the second place, we hold the Priesthood of Almighty God, with all the powers, rights, and authorities which are incident to that Priesthood.

I wonder if we believe that? I wonder if in our hearts we all have that firm conviction that we are possessed of the Priesthood of God, that that Priesthood gives us certain powers, certain rights, spiritual rights? I hope we do.

AN EVERLASTING ENDOWMENT

My brethren, I wish we could all appreciate that wherever we go, this Priesthood goes with us. The Priesthood is not like a suit of clothes that you can lay off and take back on. It is an everlasting—depending upon ourselves—an everlasting endowment. If we could get that into our minds and hearts, so that it was really a part and parcel of us, we would be far nearer to a solution of our many difficulties—the difficulties of life that beset us—than we are today.

If we really had that thought, that conviction, and that recollection of the character of the Priesthood which we hold, and that we could not lay it aside, and that God would hold us responsible if we prostituted it, it would save us from doing a good many things, save us from going a good many places. If, every time we started a little detour away from the straight and narrow, we would remember, "I am carrying my Priesthood here. Should I?" it would not take us long to work back into the straight and narrow.

I often think that I should try, and I do try, never to be anywhere or engaged in anything, so that if suddenly called to the bedside of the sick, and particularly of my own, I would have to go blushing, or trying to forget where I had been, what I was doing.

Brethren, if we could just hold a few simple little things like that in our minds we would find it so much easier to tread the narrow way. If you were called to the bedside of your loved one, not in the

condition, and not so you could invoke as a right, and feeling you had a right, the power of the Priesthood, and the worst happened, what are you going to do about it? What are you going to think about it? What is your wife going to think about it? For the chances are the wife is living more nearly as she should than you, if you were thus guilty. Oh, my brethren, don't sell your birthright—your Priesthood birthright—for a mess of pottage.

CHASTITY TO BE GUARDED

I would like to urge you young people to guard, even as you guard your life, your chastity. I would like you to remember and to know that for a moment of ecstasy you can have an eternity of pain. It is not worth it, and if you would keep yourselves straight, then never make the first approach. I am telling you boys that if you will conduct yourselves properly, if you let it be known to your associates of the opposite sex that you are strict, you will never have much difficulty with them. It is only when you begin to edge over that they, if they be bad, come along.

INCIDENT IN LIFE OF SAVIOR

I was thinking this afternoon, after I went home from meeting, of an incident in the life of the Savior. I was moved to this thought, more or less following out some of the ideas I tried to express this morning. You remember that awhile after the Savior was crucified and resurrected, Peter, Thomas, Didymus, Nathaniel of Cana, James and John, and two others—seven of them altogether—responded to Peter's suggestion that they go fishing. Peter evidently thought that it was all over. Even though the Savior had visited them at least twice before, he did not understand what it was all about.

So they went fishing. They fished all night and caught nothing, as you will remember. The next morning, as the day dawned, they were near shore, and they saw, standing on the beach, a man. The man asked them if they had caught any fish, and they said no. He said, "Throw your net on the other side." They did, and it was filled.

Then John said, "It is the Lord." And I think John had in mind an earlier experience at the beginning of the Savior's mission, when on one occasion, he entered a boat belonging to Peter, and had him push it out from the shore so that the people could not gather round too close to him, and preached a sermon. Then he told Peter to row out and get some fish. Peter said, "I have fished all night and have not caught anything, but if you say so, I will row it out." So he went out a little distance. The Savior told him to throw out his net, and he caught the fish, so many that he had to call for his partners, the sons of Zebedee, to come and help him.

At that sight, Peter said, "Depart from me. I am a sinful man,

O Lord." And after a little conversation, the Lord said, "Fear not, as hereafter you will catch men."

I think that John remembered that as he heard the direction to put the net on the other side, and then he said, "It is the Lord." You will remember that they caught the fish, great quantities of them.

Peter—I love Peter. He had a little trouble the night before the crucifixion, but Peter was a great man, the man whom the Lord chose to be the senior in the presidency. Peter girded his coat about him, for he was naked. I have always thought there was a lesson in that—that Peter would not appear before the Lord nude.

At golf clubs and other places you men run around nude. I wonder if that is quite right. I would think about it if I were you.

Peter went ashore, and the other men came ashore. They saw it was the Lord, and the Lord told them to bring some more fish. He had fish, and he had bread. The fish was cooked. They ate their meat there on the seashore, there in the early morning light.

CHARGE TO PETER

When they had finished, the Lord said to Peter, "Peter, lovest thou me more than these?"

And Peter ignored the second part of the question and said, "Lord, thou knowest I love thee." The Lord said, "Feed my lambs."

Then he renewed the question, "Peter lovest thou me?" "Yea, Lord, thou knowest I love thee." And the third time the question came, and then as the record says, Peter was grieved, and said, "O, Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest I love thee." "Feed my sheep."

I have always thought that that was a commandment that was just as pertinent, and belonged just as much to us as it belonged to Peter. It was an everlasting command to the bearers of God's Priesthood.

And so to you brethren I repeat that the Lord has said you are to feed his sheep. What are you going to feed them? Are you going to feed them—spiritually, I mean, of course—the right kind of food, or are you going to feed them with doubt, with rationalizing? Are you going to try to feed them on mysteries? Are you going to try to weaken the commandments of the Lord regarding the Word of Wisdom by yourselves smoking or drinking? Are you going to feed them alleged spiritual materials that are not spiritual, but are destructive of their faith?

ONLY ONE WAY

Here I want to return to my theme song, unity. The Lord has told us, in the books what are his commandments. He has laid down the truth. Read the books. I think we sadly lack the reading of the scriptures. They are wonderful books. You can find

no more interesting stories, if you will, than you find in the Bible, and none that are more interesting, more faith-promoting, than you find in the history of our Church. Read them. You learn the food you should feed, and then feed it.

And the unity comes in this: that there are not two ways, there is only one way. We should always feed the same food to all of our youth.

Brethren, the weight of our responsibility as parents, grandparents, we who bear the Priesthood, the Priesthood of Almighty God—the weight of that responsibility, if we really sense it, is almost crushing. Yet, Brethren, if we shall live righteously ourselves, if we shall serve the Lord, if we shall keep his commandments, he will give us the strength and power to live as we should, to teach as we should, to lead as we should, and we shall get that strength and that power in that direction in no other way.

Brethren, I plead with you, magnify your Priesthood. Remember it is with you always, never do anything to prostitute it or pollute it. Live righteously always.

TESTIMONY

I bear my testimony to the truth of the Restored Gospel, that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph was a prophet, that those who have followed him, down to and including our present prophet, seer and revelator, are prophets of the Almighty. It is our duty as the Priesthood so to recognize, so to honor, and so to obey. May the Lord help us so to do I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Men's Chorus and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, "I Know that My Redeemer Lives."

PRESIDENT STEPHEN L RICHARDS

First Counselor in the First Presidency

It seemed to me that I could feel the strength of your testimonies in that glorious song, and that helps to fortify me for my attempt to fill this, my first assignment in my present capacity, to address the General Priesthood meeting of the Conference.

I feel deeply humble in this undertaking, and I sincerely ask for the Spirit of the Lord to attend me and for your cooperation and faith and prayers.

I understand that it is appropriate and desirable at this meeting to bring before the Priesthood, which includes our presiding officers in stakes and wards and missions, some items which need attention. So with your indulgence and President McKay's permission, I will bring before you a few items first affecting our missionary service, in