

Friday, April 6

President David O. McKay:  
Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin will be our

next speaker. He will be followed by  
Elder Sterling W. Sill.

## BISHOP JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

*Presiding Bishop of the Church*

**P**RESIDENT MCKAY, President Richards, President Clark, and my beloved brethren and sisters: I sincerely hope that I may have an interest in your prayers in the endeavor to give you one or two thoughts that I have in my mind. It is needless to say that the Presiding Bishopric is deeply interested in all the young men of the Church who hold the Aaronic Priesthood. Are fathers and mothers holding a weekly home evening where they sit down with their children and discuss the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and what it will mean to them in their lives?

I think it would be a most inspiring story—it is a true story—to tell of Jesus the Christ, at the age of twelve, being invited by Joseph and Mary to go into Jerusalem wherein they were to pay their taxes, and while there the Christ went into the temple. Immediately he entered into discussion with learned men. In the meantime, Mary and Joseph started homeward. They soon discovered that the Christ was not with them. They returned to Jerusalem and found him in the temple. Mary was sorrowful because Christ had not been with them, but he said to them,

How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (Luke 2:49.)

I think the young men who will eventually hold the Aaronic Priesthood, who have in their hearts the words, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" as the priesthood is bestowed upon them, will be anxious to go forward and render the assignments that will come to them.

It is a wonderful thing in the home to discuss with our young people the history of John the Baptist, a very young man who had an assignment from on high. The beloved John the Apostle said, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John," (John 1:6) and John was sent among the people to preach repentance and baptism for the

remission of sins, to tell them that Jesus the Christ was to appear, and in the course of time confer upon them the Holy Ghost.

Our sons should know of the crucifixion of the Christ and his resurrection; that after the resurrection he appeared on this, the American continent, and established the Church of Jesus Christ as he had established it in far-off Jerusalem. I think if our young people had that history and had it in their hearts and understood fully the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as it has been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith, it would so impress them that they would endeavor to live it in every way.

It would be most inspiring and wonderful to tell these young people something about the Apostles who lived in the days of Jesus the Christ, and who were selected by him, particularly of Peter, James, and John who were actually the presidency of the first Church established by the Christ. They should know and understand that the Church of Jesus Christ was actually organized by Christ in the days of these apostles.

They should know something of the Book of Mormon—how Joseph Smith received the same—and in that wonderful book we find the story of the Christ and his gospel in its fulness. It is an interesting thing to tell them, too, how that same Christ appeared among the Nephites, and among other things the Nephites heard God the Father saying, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him," (3 Nephi 11:7) and thereby, came the establishment of the great Church of Jesus Christ here upon the American continent.

Thereafter, I think it is a fine thing to discuss with these young people and point out to them that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ was lost because men were seeking different doctrines, that the priesthood had been taken away, and there was darkness upon the earth. It

would be inspiring to discuss the Prophet Joseph who went to the Lord and asked the Lord wherein he might find the true Church, and in reply the Lord appeared and introduced the Christ himself, saying, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (P of G P, Joseph Smith 2:17.)

It would be a source of inspiration for our young people to know that the Aaronic Priesthood was brought back to the earth through John the Baptist and bestowed upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and also that the Melchizedek Priesthood was restored by Peter, James, and John, the Apostles of Jesus the Christ in a former day. These young people should know that these are realities, that they actually happened, and then there will be a desire to live the gospel and enjoy all of the blessings therein.

As parents, we have great responsibilities, as President McKay has already pointed out to us. I suggest that sometime you read in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 68, verses 25-28, with reference to our responsibilities as parents. The Lord made it very clear, as far as our sons and daughters are concerned, that we should teach them the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ, the Son of the Living God, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Then the Lord went on and said this to us in conclusion: "And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord." (D & C 68:28.)

We should read to them about the appearance of John the Baptist to the Prophet Joseph when he said this:

Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. (D & C 13.)

These young men are ordained members of the Aaronic Priesthood at the age of twelve. In the minds of many people, this may seem questionable; but it should not be, because if they will but read or hear the words again, and repeat them and remember them, the

words of Christ, when he spoke to his mother and said: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" I am sure that every deacon will have that same attitude.

It is a wonderful thing if a father will tell his son what it means to pass the sacrament and what it means to be called by the bishop to go out and collect the fast offerings for the good of those who are in need. It is an inspiring lesson that ought to be taught to these young men to the end that day by day they will endeavor to live the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and actually have in their hearts his spirit. It is a marvelous thing to talk to these young men about the Prophet Joseph, who at the age of fourteen asked the Lord, "Lord, where may I find the Church of the Christ?" and in answer thereto, the Father and the Son appeared, and the Father said, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" And Joseph, at the age of fourteen, heard these words of the Christ and received direction from on high as to how the Church should be established.

It is well to remember that many of these young men who hold the Aaronic Priesthood at the age of fourteen are called to be teachers—to go out among the people and teach them the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, with a member of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and to render such other service as the bishop may feel is necessary.

It is a wonderful thing to think of the priests, these young men who at the age of sixteen become active in the same assignments as did John the Baptist. It is marvelous to know that these young men have the right to preach repentance, perform the ordinance of baptism, and bless the Sacrament. John the Baptist did not have the privilege of blessing the Sacrament because he had passed on, and the Sacrament of course was established just before Christ was crucified. So these young priests of today have opportunities that John the Baptist did not enjoy. We also read in the Book of Mormon: "After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, they laid their hands upon them, and said:

"In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a priest, (or, if he be a teacher)

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I ordain you to be a teacher, to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end. Amen." (Moroni 3:2-3.)

Responsibility devolves upon bishops, bishops' counselors, fathers and mothers, that we should impress upon these young men the sacredness of blessing the Sacrament, and what the Sacrament means and its purpose; and also the privilege of performing the ordinance of baptism. If these young men understand the full meaning of the Sacrament and preaching repentance, they will become so interested that they will try to live lives in harmony with Jesus the Christ and say, as he said: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

So, brethren and sisters, as parents we have great responsibility, as President McKay has already pointed out, in our homes; and I think one of the greatest responsibilities that falls upon us, and one we should follow closely, is the matter of holding a home evening with our young people. Call on some of them to pray. Give some of them the assignment to tell us something about faith, something about the gift of the Holy Ghost, and something about the matter of holding the Aaronic Priesthood. If that is done, there is no question that these young people will meet all of the requirements that come to them through the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost.

Only last Sunday, I attended a conference where many of these young people had the opportunity of bearing testimony. It was a great thrill to hear them say that they know that Jesus the Christ lives—that they know that this is his Church. Some might question it because of their age; but nevertheless if they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, they will have that knowledge.

I recall the time when I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church at fast meeting. I had a peculiar feeling, and something came to my soul that gave me happiness and joy—something that I had never experienced before. On the way home, I said to Mother: "I had a peculiar feeling, Mother, when the bishop laid his hands upon my head and

confirmed me a member of the Church, and said, 'Receive the Holy Ghost.'"

"Said, 'what was the feeling?'"

I said, "A feeling of happiness, a feeling that filled my soul—something I have never had before."

She said, "What did he say to you, Son?"

I said, "'Receive the Holy Ghost.'"

So mother said to me, "Son, without a doubt the Lord was good enough to bestow upon you the gift of the Holy Ghost," and from that time until this time I have known that Jesus the Christ lives. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I know our President here is a prophet of God, and those who assist him. I know that these twelve men are all apostles, each one of them, with the same power and privileges and rights that Peter, James, and John enjoyed in their time and age.

So, parents, it is a wonderful thing that your sons who hold the Aaronic Priesthood will have the feeling and the desire to go forward and to render every service that is required of them, that they may follow the admonition in the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 3:

Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work.

And they are called if they receive the Aaronic Priesthood, especially if you and I will so encourage them and teach them.

So, fathers and mothers, I think, too, of what the Lord has said to you and me, as parents, when he said this: "And they [speaking of us] shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord." (D & C 68:28.) So there is no question about prayer; there is no question about walking uprightly before the Lord, but that he will bless them and inspire them and lead them on, and that everyone of them will have the same feeling as the Christ had at the age of twelve, when he said: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" This I pray will be the blessing of every member of the Aaronic Priesthood, and every young person who has membership in this Church, which I humbly ask and pray for in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.