

President Joseph Fielding Smith

● My beloved brethren: My feelings are to bless those, both young and old, who are magnifying their callings in the priesthood, and to ask the Lord to pour out upon them the good things of his Spirit in this life and assure them of the riches of eternity in the life to come.

With all my heart I say to those who are keeping the commandments, who are serving faithfully in the Church, and who are working for the good and betterment of mankind generally, with all my heart I say: The Lord bless you; and you may rest assured that if you continue in the paths of truth and righteousness, he will welcome you into his eternal kingdom and give you an inheritance with the prophets and saints of all ages.

The priesthood restored

What a glorious thing it is to know that the Lord has offered to each of us the fullness of the priesthood, and has promised us that if we will receive this priesthood and magnify our callings, we shall gain an everlasting inheritance with him in his kingdom!

This priesthood which we have received is the power and authority of God delegated to man on earth to act in all things for the salvation of men. It has come to us in this day through the ministry of heavenly messengers sent to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

When Moroni came to Joseph Smith in September 1823, he quoted to him these words which the Lord had given to Malachi: "Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (D&C 2:1.)

To prepare the way for the coming of Elijah and the restoration of the sealing power, because of which men may receive the fullness of the priesthood, John the Baptist came in May of 1829 and conferred upon Joseph and Oliver the Aaronic Priesthood. A short

time later Peter, James, and John came and gave them the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Then on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, Elijah the prophet returned and bestowed upon them the sealing power, the power to use the priesthood to bind on earth and seal in heaven.

Fullness of the priesthood

Then in 1841 the Lord revealed to the Prophet that "the fullness of the priesthood" was available to men only in the temple, in "a house" built to his name. (See D&C 124.) And in 1843 the Prophet said: "If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord." (*Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 244.)

Let me put this in a little different way. I do not care what office you hold in the Church—you may be an apostle, you may be a patriarch, a high priest, or anything else—but you cannot receive the fullness of the priesthood and the fullness of eternal reward unless you receive the ordinances of the house of the Lord; and when you receive these ordinances, the door is then open so you can obtain all the blessings which any man can gain.

Do not think because someone has a higher office in the Church than you have that you are barred from receiving the fullness of the Lord's blessings. You can have them sealed upon you as an elder, if you are faithful; and when you receive them, and live faithfully and keep these covenants, you then have all that any man can get.

Oath and covenant

There is no exaltation in the kingdom of God without the fullness of the priesthood, and every man who receives the Melchizedek Priesthood does so with an oath and a covenant that he shall be exalted.

The covenant on man's part is that he will magnify his calling in the priesthood, and that he will live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, and that he will keep the commandments.

The covenant on the Lord's part is that if man does as he promises, then all that the Father hath shall be given unto him; and this is such a solemn and important promise that the Lord swears with an oath that it shall come to pass.

A preparatory priesthood

Those of you who hold the Aaronic Priesthood have not yet received this oath and covenant which belongs to the Higher Priesthood, but you do have great power and authority given you from the Lord. The Aaronic Priesthood is a preparatory priesthood that schools and trains us to be worthy of these other great blessings that come later.

If you serve faithfully as a deacon, as a teacher, and as a priest, you gain the experience and acquire the abilities and capacities which enable you to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and to magnify your calling in it.

The Aaronic Priesthood holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of preaching the gospel of repentance, and of performing baptism for the remission of sins. These are very great blessings and are necessary to prepare the way for the even greater blessings of the house of the Lord, those blessings out of which exaltation comes.

Women share blessings

I think we all know that the blessings of the priesthood are not confined to men alone. These blessings are also poured out upon our wives and daughters and upon all the faithful women of the Church. These good sisters can prepare themselves, by keeping the commandments and by serving in the Church, for the blessings of the house of the Lord. The Lord offers to his daughters every spiritual gift and blessing that can be obtained by his sons, for neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord.

Now may the blessings of heaven rest upon those who hold the holy priesthood, and upon all our Father's children. Brethren, you possess the power and authority of Almighty God, and you hold in your hands the power to save and exalt yourselves and your loved ones.

Putting God's kingdom first

There is nothing in all this world as important to each of us as putting first in our lives the things of God's kingdom, as keeping the commandments, as magnifying our callings in the priesthood, as going to the house of the Lord and being offered the fullness of the blessings of our Father's kingdom.

Now, my brethren of the priesthood, I commend you for your faith and labors in the cause of righteousness. I commend you for your zeal and devotion in doing the work of the Lord and in using your priesthood to bless mankind.

Your able service does not go unnoticed by that God whom you serve and in whose work you are engaged. He has blessed you and he will continue to bless you with the good things of the earth, and he will hold in reserve for you the riches of eternity.

Spiritual and temporal blessings

And so I pray that you may be blessed and prospered, both temporally and spiritually, and that you may be built up in faith and testimony, and have the desires of your hearts in righteousness.

I pray that the spirit of love and peace may be in your homes, that fathers and sons may work together in love in the priesthood, and that a perfect spirit of unity and oneness may prevail among all the Latter-day Saints.

I pray that our Father may help our Aaronic Priesthood brethren as they prepare for life and safeguard them in times of trouble and temptation, and that above all they—and all of us—may keep the commandments and be worthy of the companionship of the Holy Spirit.

And I pray that all of us may have peace and joy and satisfaction in the work of the Lord while in this mortal probation, and that we may inherit eternal life in the realms ahead, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

The Aaronic Priesthood Chorus

sang "What Was Witnessed in the Heavens."

The closing prayer was given by Elder Richard G. Scott, former president of the North Argentine Mission.

The conference was then adjourned until Sunday morning at ten o'clock.

SECOND DAY

MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the conference convened on Sunday, April 5, 1970, at 10 o'clock a.m.

President Joseph Fielding Smith presided, and President Harold B. Lee, first counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the meeting.

The music for this session was furnished by the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir. Elder Richard P. Condie directed the singing. Elder Alexander Schreiner was at the organ.

Before the opening of the conference session, the Tabernacle Choir sang the number, "Rejoice the Lord Is King."

President Lee made the following introductory statement:

President Harold B. Lee

President Joseph Fielding Smith is presiding at this conference this morning. He has asked me to conduct this session.

It is a great pleasure for us to welcome all present this morning in this historic Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. We welcome also special guests—national and local government leaders, educational and civic leaders, and stake and ward leaders from far and near. We welcome friends from other churches, and also the vast television and radio audiences in this, the fourth session of the 140th Annual

Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Richard P. Condie, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will open these services by singing "O Lord Most Holy," following which Elder Karl M. Richards, former president of the French Polynesian Mission, will offer the invocation.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the number, "O Lord Most Holy."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Karl M. Richards, former president of the French Polynesian Mission.

President Lee:

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "O Praise Ye God," after which President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency will speak to us.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the anthem, "O Praise Ye God."

President Lee:

Our first speaker this morning will be President N. Eldon Tanner, second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.