

He listened. He obeyed. And through the authority and power of the priesthood, a young life was made whole.

May the Lord bless all of you young men as you develop *your* personal relationship with the Savior. I testify that he lives! I testify that he knows your name! He knows you intimately! He loves you! May his power and blessing be with you in your

Aaronic Priesthood ministry. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Traveling to the four corners of the world we encounter all too often a spirit of gloom among the people. Their concerns range from wars, rumors of wars, famine, and inflation to drug addiction, climate changes, pollution, bigness of government, etc. I can understand why those who are without faith in our Lord and Savior would become prophets of gloom. Times can be difficult. However, a look at the causes of the difficulties proves that they are man-made and that solutions are within man's ability to accomplish.

System and order established by the Lord

The Lord has given us the comforting assurance that "if ye are prepared ye shall not fear." (D&C 38:30.) The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches hope and opportunity. To find the happiness we are seeking and rid ourselves of fear, we must be prepared to follow the system and order the Lord has established for His children here on earth.

The leadership of the Church since the very beginning has taught and trained us in the way we should be organized. During what I consider to be the most difficult periods in the history of the Church, when the Prophet Joseph Smith was unjustly

imprisoned in the Liberty Jail, the Lord selected this time to give him the revelation on the priesthood. To the Prophet's cry for relief, the Lord replied:

"How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.

"Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?

"Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

"That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness." (D&C 121:33-36.)

Organize ourselves

If man is limited in his growth and perfection by his ability to use his priesthood, then surely we must continually strive to use its power and to organize ourselves more perfectly.

As I have traveled to the stakes of

the Church, I have found priesthood organizations functioning quite effectively at the stake and ward levels. Generally, the greatest weaknesses exist in the organization and operations in both the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums. Let me direct a few words of instruction to you who have the responsibility for this important link in the priesthood chain.

President Stephen L Richards at one time gave us a threefold definition of a priesthood quorum. He said a priesthood quorum is three things: "first, a class; second, a fraternity; and third, a service unit." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1938, p. 118.) Let us look at his definition as it relates to our priesthood quorums.

A class: for teaching the Lord's law

First, a class. In the Doctrine and Covenants we read,

"And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith." (D&C 88:118.)

The quorum meetings have been designed for the purpose of teaching us the law of the Lord. Fundamental in this teaching is instruction in our duties as bearers of the priesthood. It is not a time for speculation regarding the mysteries of the world. It is a time of basic, practical, how-to instruction, for which we can find application in our lives. The lessons should teach us how we can become better husbands, fathers, and members of quorums and should teach us our responsibilities to our fellowmen.

This summer I had the opportunity of attending a high priest group meeting in a small community in southern Wyoming. The lesson that week was on justification and sanctification. It was evident as the lesson was beginning that the teacher was well prepared to instruct his brethren. Then a question prompted a response

which changed the whole course of the lesson. In response to the question, the comment of one of the brethren was, "I have listened with great interest to the lesson material. The thought has crossed my mind that the information presented will soon be lost if we do not find application to put the material presented into practice in our daily lives."

Then he went on to propose a course of action for the quorum. The night before, a citizen of the community had passed away. His wife was a member of the Church, but he had not been. This high priest had visited the widow and offered his sympathy. Leaving the home after the visit, his eyes wandered over the beautiful farm of the deceased brother. He had put so much of his life and labor into building it up. The alfalfa was ready to cut; the grain would soon be ready to harvest. How would this poor sister cope with the sudden problems now falling on her? She would need time to get herself organized for her new responsibilities.

Then he proposed to the group that they make an application of the principle that was being taught—by working with the widow to keep her farm operational until such time as a more permanent solution could be found by the widow and her family. The balance of the meeting was spent in organizing the project to assist her. The principles of the lesson found immediate application.

As we left the classroom, there was a good feeling among the brethren. I heard one of them remark as he passed through the doorway, "This project is just what we needed to get this quorum working together again." A lesson had been taught, a brotherhood had been strengthened, a service project had been organized to assist someone in need.

Brethren, let us make of our quorums a class where we will receive the best instruction possible to guide us in

our responsibilities and obligations as bearers of His holy priesthood.

A fraternity: achievement of the total quorum

Second, the quorum as a fraternity. Many years ago I was called to be the adviser to a priests quorum. It was during a time when the Church had instituted a standard quorum award program. The program was designed to encourage the full quorum to have an interest in each member. An award was given for the achievement of the total quorum, not for individual accomplishment.

This was a quorum of high-spirited, devoted young men. They fulfilled their quorum responsibilities almost 100 percent, with the exception of one member. Bill had lost his father the previous year, and he was having a hard time adjusting to this great loss in his life. His mother was doing all she could to help Bill find himself again, but he started missing his meetings and developing some other bad habits.

After Bill had missed one meeting, a quorum member was assigned to contact him and encourage him to attend his quorum meeting. The quorum member was only able to reach his mother, who explained that Bill stayed out so late on Saturday night she could not get him up on Sunday morning. The second week came and still no Bill in quorum meeting. Again a contact was tried, with the same result.

As we assembled for quorum meeting the third week without Bill, I could see there was great concern on the part of the quorum for their absent member. They expressed the fact they were not a whole quorum without him, and they could not hold another meeting without Bill. I asked for suggestions. Quick was the response that we go over to his home and hold the meeting.

We drove to Bill's house. His mother was most cooperative and invited us to go back into Bill's bed-

room. There was Bill, comfortably sleeping in his bed. We started the meeting with a spirited opening hymn. On the first note Bill came up out of those sheets like he had been shot out of a gun. He wondered what was happening to him.

What followed was one of the sweet experiences of my life. Each quorum member expressed his love for Bill. This was followed by a kneeling prayer around Bill's bed. Bill got to his feet after the prayer with tears rolling down his face. We shook hands and left, a whole quorum once again. Bill knew of the love his quorum members had for him, and he wanted to be a part of it.

Elder Ruder Clawson of the Council of the Twelve once said: "The Priesthood of God on earth has been organized into quorums for the mutual good of the members, and for the advancement of the Church. A quorum which meets merely to study lessons, only partially accomplishes its purposes. . . . The spirit of brotherhood should be the directing force in all the plans and operations of the quorum. If this spirit be cultivated, wisely and persistently, no other organization will become more attractive to the man who holds the Priesthood." Let us build a bond of brotherhood for each member of our quorum.

A service unit: serving with love and understanding

Third, the quorum is a service unit. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" was the counsel of the Savior to Peter. (Luke 22:32.) The obligation of membership in our Father in Heaven's kingdom is to be of service to His children.

President Joseph F. Smith once told of an instance he remembered from his boyhood. He said that when he was very young he was attending a party in the Mansion House given by his uncle, the Prophet Joseph Smith. A large company was present, engaging

in the festivities of the occasion. Suddenly the door opened and a man entered, dressed in ragged, shabby clothes. He was dirty, and his hair and beard were long and unkempt. He looked like a tramp. The Prophet at the time was on the other side of the room, opposite the door through which the man had come. President Smith said that Joseph, athletic man that he was, fairly sprang across the room, grabbed the shabby man in his arms, and hugged him as if he were a near and dear relative. This man was a brother in the priesthood. He had undergone a harrowing experience and made a tremendous sacrifice for his brother, the Prophet of God. (See Stephen L. Richards, "The Priesthood Quorum: A Three-fold Definition," *Improvement Era*, May 1939, p. 294.) The history of the Church is filled with accounts of quorum brother serving quorum brother with great love and understanding.

President Stephen L. Richards has said:

"The Priesthood is usually simply defined as 'the power of God delegated to man.' This definition, I think, is accurate. But for practical purposes I like to define the Priesthood in terms of service and I frequently call it 'the perfect plan of service.' I do so because it seems to me that it is only through the utilization of the divine power conferred on men that they may ever hope to realize the full import and vitality of this endowment. It is an instrument of service. Its uses and purposes are all defined in terms of service and the man who fails to use it is apt to lose it, for we are plainly told by revelation that he who neglects it 'shall not be counted worthy to stand.' [D&C 107:100.]"

Elder Richards continues:

"The Priesthood is not static and a man's ordination to it is not a static investiture. There may be some men, however, who so regard it, for they seem to be so smug and content with their ordinations.

"I can well imagine such a man going into the presence of the great Eternal Judge and saying in substance, 'While I was on earth I was a High Priest. I come now to claim the reward of a High Priest.' I think it is not difficult to suppose what may be his answer. He will likely be met with such questions as these, 'What did you do when you were a High Priest? How did you use this great power which you held? Whom did you bless with it?' Upon his reply to such interrogatories as these will his reward be predicated." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1937, pp. 46-47.)

Brethren, let us teach our quorums how to serve.

Understand and apply principles of priesthood organization

I am of the persuasion that the greatest preparation we can make to relieve ourselves from fear of the future will not be the year's supply we accumulate in our basements, the savings accounts we build, or the stocks and bonds we store in our safety deposit boxes. As important as these are for the protection of our family, our real security, I believe, will be found in our understanding of the priesthood organization and in sound application of priesthood principles. At the very foundation of the priesthood structure is the properly organized, trained, and functioning quorum of the priesthood.

Let us return to our wards and stakes and evaluate again how well we are prepared in our priesthood quorum organizations. Are they functioning as a class to train the brothers in their priesthood responsibilities? Are they functioning as a brotherhood to bless the lives of each member? Are they functioning to render service to their families, to the Church, and to the communities in which they are organized?

May we be quickened in our hearts this night with a firm resolve

that high on the priority list during the months ahead will be the strengthening of our priesthood quorums, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel."

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

President Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

The Brethren have asked that I now speak to you. This has been a wonderful meeting. I hope that we long remember what we have heard.

Follow teachings of the gospel

As I consider some of the problems people cause themselves by failing to look ahead, I think of a letter I clipped a long time ago from a newspaper. It was first published in England. I hope you will pardon a bit of humor. I use it only to set the stage for what I wish to say.

It appears that an English company owned a property in the West Indies. A violent storm damaged one of the buildings, and a man was sent to make repairs. Of his experience, he wrote the manager as follows:

"Respected Sir,

"When I got to the building, I found that the hurricane had knocked some bricks off the top. So I rigged up a beam with a pulley at the top of the building and hoisted up a couple of barrels full of bricks. When I had fixed the building, there was a lot of bricks left over.

"I hoisted the barrel back up again and secured the line at the bottom, and then went up and filled the barrel with extra bricks. Then I went to the bottom and cast off the line.

"Unfortunately, the barrel of bricks was heavier than I was, and

before I knew what was happening the barrel started down, jerking me off the ground. I decided to hang on, and halfway up I met the barrel coming down and received a severe blow on the shoulder.

"I then continued to the top, banging my head against the beam and getting my finger jammed in the pulley. When the barrel hit the ground, it bursted its bottom, allowing all the bricks to spill out.

"I was now heavier than the barrel and so started down again at high speed. Halfway down, I met the barrel coming up and received severe injuries to my shins. When I hit the ground, I landed on the bricks, getting several painful cuts from the sharp edges.

"At this point I must have lost my presence of mind, because I let go of the line. The barrel then came down, giving me another heavy blow on the head and putting me in the hospital.

"I respectfully request sick leave."

After hearing that, you wonder how anyone could be so thoughtless and shortsighted. And yet every day we see people whose lives become entangled and who are bumped and bruised because they fail to plan, to think, to consult with others, to follow the teachings of the gospel. I appreciate what has been said tonight