

President James E. Faust

My beloved brethren of the priesthood, it is very humbling to feel the great strength gathered here and in the many buildings across the world. As we gather tonight, we praise the name of President Howard W. Hunter for his life and his ministry and for all that we have learned from him. God bless his memory.

Brethren, I confess to you that I am not very comfortable in the calling I have received. I earnestly desire, with all humility, your faith and prayers. If I did not have the absolute conviction that "a man must be called of God"¹ to any office in the Church, I could not serve for one hour in this calling. I express my profound appreciation to President Gordon B. Hinckley for the honor and the trust he has shown to me in calling me to be his second counselor. He has my total loyalty and support.

As I expressed in the press conference on Monday, March 13, 1995, I have had the great privilege of associating in various Church assignments with President Gordon B. Hinckley for forty years. I know his heart. I know his soul. I know of his faith. I know of his dedication. I know of his great capacity. I know of his love of the Lord and God's holy work. I have a great personal affection and regard for him. I also know that he has been foreordained and marvelously prepared to be the President of this church in our day and time.

My association with President Thomas S. Monson has also been long and blessed. We have worked closely together for decades in several capacities. His mind and memory are unique, his faith simple and absolute. President Monson is a big man, but the biggest part of him is his great heart. He has tremendous talent. I feel very humbled to serve with President Hinckley and President Monson. I have profound respect and

admiration for President Packer, each member of the Twelve, and all of the General Authorities. And I welcome Brother Eyring into the choice fellowship of the sacred apostleship.

The Lord's shepherds

Tonight I would like to speak to the priesthood of God in their capacity as the Lord's shepherds. Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated: "Anyone serving in any capacity in the Church in which he is responsible for the spiritual or temporal well-being of any of the Lord's children is a shepherd to those sheep. The Lord holds his shepherds accountable for the safety [meaning the salvation] of his sheep."² The bearers of the priesthood have this great responsibility, whether it is father, grandfather, home teacher, elders quorum president, bishop, stake president, or other Church calling.

Initially I speak to the worthy young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. When I was a very small boy, my father found a lamb all alone out in the desert. The herd of sheep to which its mother belonged had moved on, and somehow the lamb got separated from its mother, and the shepherd must not have known that it was lost. Because it could not survive alone in the desert, my father picked it up and brought it home. To have left the lamb there would have meant certain death, either by falling prey to the coyotes or by starvation because it was so young that it still needed milk. Some sheepmen call these lambs "bummers." My father gave the lamb to me, and I became its shepherd.

For several weeks I warmed cow's milk in a baby's bottle and fed the lamb. We became fast friends. I called him Nigh—why, I don't remember. It began to grow. My lamb and I would play on the lawn. Sometimes we would lie together on the grass and I would lay my

head on its soft, woolly side and look up at the blue sky and the white billowing clouds. I did not lock my lamb up during the day. It would not run away. It soon learned to eat grass. I could call my lamb from anywhere in the yard by just imitating as best I could the bleating sound of a sheep: *Baa. Baa.*

One night there came a terrible storm. I forgot to put my lamb in the barn that night as I should have done. I went to bed. My little friend was frightened in the storm, and I could hear it bleating. I knew that I should help my pet, but I wanted to stay safe, warm, and dry in my bed. I didn't get up as I should have done. The next morning I went out to find my lamb dead. A dog had also heard its bleating cry and killed it. My heart was broken. I had not been a good shepherd or steward of that which my father had entrusted to me. My father said, "Son, couldn't I trust you to take care of just one lamb?" My father's remark hurt me more than losing my woolly friend. I resolved that day, as a little boy, that I would try never again to neglect my stewardship as a shepherd if I were ever placed in that position again.

Not too many years thereafter I was called as a junior companion to a home teacher. There were times when it was so cold or stormy and I wanted to stay home and be comfortable, but in my mind's ear I could hear my little lamb bleating, and I knew I needed to be a good shepherd and go with my senior companion. In all those many years, whenever I have had a desire to shirk my duties, there would come to me a remembrance of how sorry I was that night so many years ago when I had not been a good shepherd. I have not always done everything I should have, but I have tried.

Duties of husbands and fathers

I should like to speak for a few minutes about the constitutional duties of

the Lord's shepherds. By that I mean those responsibilities which are contained in the revelations given by the Lord himself. There is no greater responsibility than that of being a husband and a father, from which there is no release. The Lord said, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else."³ The Lord further says to the fathers of this church, "I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth."⁴

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

"And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy."⁵

Duties of home teachers

Another great responsibility is that of the home teacher:

"The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them;

"And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking."⁶

A further commandment is to "see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty."⁷ They are to "warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ."⁸

Duties of local priesthood leaders

The priesthood quorum presidents and their counselors are also shepherds of the sheepfold and bear the responsibility to lovingly care for the members of their quorums. The bishops of the Church are some of the watchmen on the tower. Said Paul to Timothy regarding the bishops of the Church:

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

"Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

"(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"⁹

Of the Aaronic Priesthood the Lord has said, "The bishopric is the presidency of this priesthood, and holds the keys or authority of the same."¹⁰ Bishops, our young men are experiencing the storms of life. There are vicious wolves prowling to devour them. Many of them are like my little lamb, crying out for help. We plead with you bishops to do all you can to keep them safe.

The stake president is also a constitutional officer of the Church, for he presides over the stake, which the Lord has said "may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth."¹¹ The stakes are "the curtains or the strength of Zion."¹² They are to be spiritual centers of righteousness, strength, and protection.

Duties of the Presiding Bishopric

The Presiding Bishopric, each of whom is an ordained bishop, have the responsibility for directing the temporal affairs of the Church as assigned by the First Presidency. In this great worldwide Church the responsibility of the Presiding Bishopric is heavy and great.

Duties of the Seventy

The Lord said of the Seventy:

"The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world—

thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. . . .

"The Seventy are to act in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Twelve or the traveling high council, in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations, first unto the Gentiles and then to the Jews."¹³

Duties of the Twelve

The Twelve Apostles are the "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling."¹⁴ The Lord said they are "being sent out, holding the keys, to open the door by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ."¹⁵ The Twelve are the legates of the Lord.

Duties of the First Presidency

The First Presidency have the ultimate responsibility for the affairs of the kingdom of God on the earth. Of them the Lord has said:

"Of the Melchizedek Priesthood, three Presiding High Priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church, form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church. . . .

"And the Presidency of the council of the High Priesthood shall have power to call other high priests, even twelve, to assist as counselors; and thus the Presidency of the High Priesthood and its counselors shall have power to decide upon testimony according to the laws of the church."¹⁶

Duties of the President of the Church

Of the President of the Church, the Lord has said that he is the "President of the High Priesthood of the Church; or, in other words, the Presiding High Priest over the High Priesthood of the

Church.”¹⁷ He is “to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses . . . , to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet, having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church.”¹⁸

The President of the Church directs the use of all of the keys and authority of the priesthood and is the only person who can exercise all of them, even though all of the ordained Apostles hold these keys, some of which are in latent form.

Brethren, I have been a member of the First Presidency for only a few days. It seems as though before I had this calling I had limited vision, but I have now put on glasses that allow me to see more clearly, in a small way, the magnitude of the responsibility of the President of the Church. I am afraid I am like the aristocrat who wore a monocle in one eye. Of him it was said, “He could see more than he could comprehend.” The men who see most clearly the big picture are these giants of the Lord, President Hinckley and President Monson, who have served many years faithfully as counselors to the previous Presidents of the Church.

Let us be united

Now brethren, in conclusion, in a church as vast and far-reaching as ours, there must be order. We must have, in addition to the scriptures and modern revelations, guidelines and procedures for the Church to move forward around the world in an orderly manner. There are some elements of bureaucracy which cannot help but occasionally produce some irritation and perhaps frustration. We ask you to look beyond any irritations or inconvenience in Church administration. We ask you to focus and concentrate on the simple, sublime, spiritually nourishing, and saving principles of the gospel. We ask you to stand steady. We ask you to be faithful in your stewardships as the shepherding priesthood

authority of the Church. Let us be true to our callings and the holy priesthood we bear. Let us be united in supporting and sustaining those in authority over us.

“Feed my sheep”

Brethren, after more than sixty years I can still hear in my mind the bleating, frightened cry of the lamb of my boyhood that I did not shepherd as I should have. I can also remember the loving rebuke of my father: “Son, couldn’t I trust you to take care of just one lamb?” If we are not good shepherds, I wonder how we will feel in the eternities.

“Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”¹⁹

That we may do so, I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Articles of Faith 1:5.
2. *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 710.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 42:22.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 93:40.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 68:28–29.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 20:53–54.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 20:55.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 20:59.
9. 1 Timothy 3:1–5.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 107:15.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 115:6.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 101:21.

13. Doctrine and Covenants 107:25, 34.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 107:23.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 107:35.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 107:22, 79.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 107:65–66.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 107:91–92; see also 21:1.
19. John 21:15–17.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

We shall now be pleased to hear from President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor.

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, you are an inspiring sight to behold. It is gratifying to realize that in thousands of chapels throughout the world, holders of the priesthood of God are receiving this broadcast by way of satellite transmission. Your nationalities vary and your languages are many, but a common thread binds us together. We have been entrusted to bear the priesthood and to act in the name of God. We are the recipients of a sacred trust. Much is expected of us.

With moist eyes and tender hearts we have said farewell to that gentle giant of a man, even a prophet of God, President Howard W. Hunter. We have sustained this day President Gordon B. Hinckley as the President of the Church and the prophet, seer, and revelator of God. I know that President Hinckley has been called of our Heavenly Father as the prophet and that he will lead us along those pathways the Savior has outlined. The work will go forward, and the people will be blessed. It is an honor and distinct privilege to serve with President Gordon B. Hinckley and with President James E. Faust in the First Presidency of the Church.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations”

Long years ago a divine command was given by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as He said to His beloved eleven disciples: “Go ye therefore, and teach all

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”¹ Mark records that “they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them.”²

This sacred charge has not been rescinded. Rather, it has been reemphasized. The Prophet Joseph Smith set forth the purpose of the Church when he declared, “It is the bringing of men and women to a knowledge of the eternal truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of the world, and that only through belief in Him, and faith which manifests itself in good works, can men and nations enjoy peace.”

Does the world in which we live stand in need of the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Almost everywhere one looks there appears an erosion not only of the environment but, even more seriously, an erosion of spirituality and of compliance with eternal commandments. One sees a blatant disregard for the precious souls of mankind.

It is almost as though the faces of many have been turned away from Him—even the Lord—who solemnly declared, “The worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”³ The gentle words “Come, follow me”⁴ fall on many with stopped