

And may I add this wonderful promise of His: "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more."<sup>2</sup>

At this Easter season, as we celebrate His Resurrection, let us focus our attention on the price that He paid so willingly for all of those who will follow Him and do His will.

I invite all to come and enjoy these great blessings of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ that has been restored.

Let us cast aside the traditions of men, all the things that clutter our lives and lead us carefully away from what Moroni called "the right way,"<sup>3</sup> and lift our hearts to Him who has ransomed us, even Jesus Christ our Savior, and follow Him.

Listen to the feelings of your heart and follow its prompting as you hear the messages of this conference. You will be taught from on high and receive answers to your prayers.

Let us go forth with greater enthusiasm to succor those in need and bring souls unto Him, that they may be fed, nurtured by His good word, and know His tender love. "You shall be laden with sheaves upon your back, for the laborer is worthy of his hire,"<sup>4</sup> and there will be rejoicing in many hearts.

That evening so long ago when I was invited to share my talent, the door opened to a wonderful new world of friends and activity in the Church. I am grateful for those who reached out with a warm hand of fellowship, invited me in, nurtured me, and blessed my life.

I leave you with my witness that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. This is His Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 18:10-13.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 58:42.
3. Moroni 6:4.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 31:5.

## Elder D. Lee Tobler

My beloved brethren of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood, this is a special blessing to stand at this pulpit where prophets and apostles of God and righteous and capable men and women have for many decades taught and counseled the members of the Church.

### Help families without the priesthood

Tonight it is my humble desire to be a voice of encouragement to priesthood leaders, particularly to stake and ward councils, to increase their attention to the families in the Church who do not as yet have the blessing of the Melchizedek Priesthood in their homes. These are families where the father has not yet

received the priesthood, which is so necessary in blessing and guiding his family. For these families the fulness of the gospel—particularly the blessings of the temple—awaits not only their own efforts but also the loving efforts of Church members who already understand what the temple ordinances mean to the family.

### Impact of priesthood in a home

As children we were raised in a home where it was clearly understood that the priesthood was as essential to life as was the water we drank to satisfy our thirst. My mother had experienced in her own family the joy of her large family coming into full Church activity and then

as a family going to the Salt Lake Temple. At the age of 47 years, my Grandfather Shoell had been brought into the priesthood with all of its attendant blessings. Upon the completion of a full-time mission, Mother sought a special priesthood blessing, asking that she might be directed to a worthy priesthood bearer who would not only be her husband but would also be a worthy priesthood father to her children. After that priesthood blessing, all of those righteous desires came into being for her and for us as a family in southern Nevada. From the start we were a family grounded in the priesthood and ordinances of the restored gospel, especially the sacred temple ordinances. This gave us as children a sense of being whole and complete, not only for our immediate family but also with our mother's and father's extended families.

Early on we learned of the healing power of the priesthood as Father, sometimes alone and at other times assisted by men of the ward, exercised that priesthood in our home. In the 1930s in that small Nevada pioneer town, there were no doctors. The nearest doctors were in Las Vegas or St. George. The first thought in times of accidents and sickness was to receive a blessing, invoking that priesthood power. I remember Mother saying from time to time, "We don't have doctors here in Bunkerville, but we have the priesthood to bless us, and that is enough." And mighty were the blessings which calmed and reassured both young and old. We were never powerless when the priesthood was there. I have always been grateful for that early awareness of the power of the priesthood of God in our home.

### **Priesthood protects homes from evil**

Our homes today face unprecedented challenges that are tearing at the fabric of the family—that are taking away from

the homes a sense of peace and confidence about the future. The evil forces parading immoral conduct, dishonesty, and enslavement through drugs seem to be strengthening. These moral issues and challenges will certainly not go away. We will also find that the temporal challenges with respect to everyday living will intensify. We all have become very aware that employment is no longer as secure as in former years as businesses and nonbusiness institutions all around the world merge and consolidate in order to be more competitive. The family farm is increasingly exposed to worldwide markets and general economic conditions rather than just local or national conditions of earlier years.

In virtually all pursuits, the rapidly changing conditions in the world are bearing down on families. They are causing a sense of uneasiness in parents and children. These conditions, coupled with the steady erosion of moral values, can best be dealt with in the family. This is achieved when the powers of righteousness are marshalled in the home under the worthy priesthood leadership of the father, equally yoked with a good and righteous mother.

### **Families with priesthood need not fear**

Indeed, in the February 11, 1999, letter to all the members throughout the world, the First Presidency called again upon fathers and mothers to devote their best efforts to the teaching and rearing of their children in gospel principles. Further, they counseled that the home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions.

Where the priesthood foundations to cope with these challenges are in place in the family, as in the home of my youth, then we will not fear the eventual outcomes in future years. We may be

bruised and worn, but the outcome will be of highest eternal worth. Families where the priesthood is honored and exercised will be able to endure the present pressures and become eternal families. And in the process, individual members of families will have been perfected and prepared for the rewards of the faithful.

### **Help fathers prepare for the priesthood**

There are in every ward and branch many families without the priesthood. In these families there are husbands and fathers who are simply waiting for a supportive invitation to become prepared to bear the Melchizedek Priesthood. Their wives pray and wait for that outstretched hand. These are men who, through our teaching and nurturing, can be made capable to bear that priesthood. They can be fathers of revelation and guidance to their families. They can be fathers who give blessings to their own children, who baptize them and confirm them. Husband and wife will go to the temple, and they will take their children to the temple to be sealed together for time and all eternity. They will ordain their sons to the priesthood, and they will bless their sons and daughters in sickness and in health. Most of them are already good providers to their families in a temporal sense. They must now learn how to provide for their families in an eternal spiritual sense.

There is a way for each ward through councils to reach out to all these men and women and their families and to open the roads to the temple for them. How else will we or they receive exaltation or cope with the challenges that lie ahead? May I make an appeal to the bishops and branch presidents, to Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, to the ward and branch councils to establish a high priority to reach out to these families in a prayerful, thoughtful way. Christ's Church will rise to its full stature when these families are brought safely under the mantle of the priesthood. Of Him and of His great work I testify in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Elders Ray H. Wood, Ned B. Roueché, and D. Lee Tobler of the Seventy have just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now sing "Redeemer of Israel." Following the singing President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will address us. He will be followed by President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the Presidency.

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The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

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## **President James E. Faust**

My beloved brethren, I come to this pulpit this evening with profound feelings of love and respect for your faithful obedience in honoring the priesthood you bear. I have prayed for guidance in what I should say because I wish to raise a warning voice.

### **Lack of restraint leads to destruction**

In today's society the difference between right and wrong is being obscured by loud, seductive voices calling for no restraints in human conduct. They advocate absolute freedom without regard to