

Spiritual Treasures

By President Russell M. Nelson

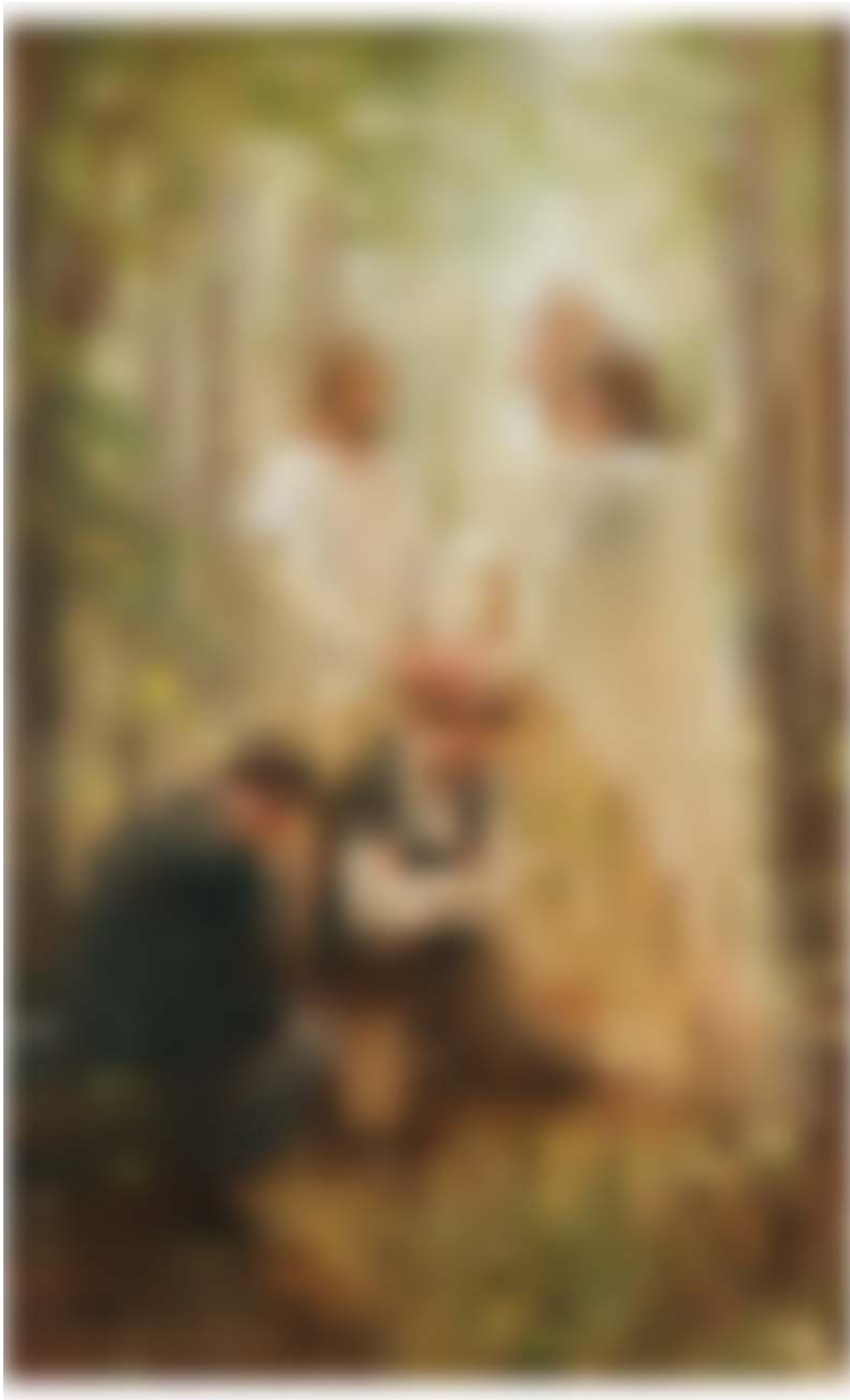
As you exercise faith in the Lord and His priesthood power, your ability to draw upon this spiritual treasure that the Lord has made available will increase.

Thank you for that beautiful music. As we all stood to sing that intermediate hymn, “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,” I had two overpowering thoughts come to me. One is about the Prophet Joseph Smith, the prophet of this dispensation. My love and admiration for him grows with every passing day. The second thought occurred as I looked at my wife, my daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters. I felt like I’d like to claim every one of you as part of my family.

Several months ago, at the end of a temple endowment session, I said to my wife Wendy, “I hope the sisters understand the spiritual treasures that are theirs in the temple.” Sisters, I often find myself thinking about you, including two months ago when Wendy and I visited Harmony, Pennsylvania.



This was our second trip there. Both times we have been deeply moved as we walked on that sacred ground. It was near Harmony that John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and restored the Aaronic Priesthood.



It was there that the Apostles Peter, James, and John appeared to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood.

It was in Harmony that Emma Hale Smith served as her husband's first scribe while the Prophet translated the Book of Mormon.

It was also in Harmony that Joseph received a revelation manifesting the Lord's will to Emma. The Lord instructed Emma to expound the scriptures, to exhort the Church, to receive the Holy Ghost, and to spend her time "learning much." Emma was also counseled to "lay aside the things of this world and seek for the things of a better" and to hold fast to her covenants with God. The Lord concluded His instruction with these compelling words: "This is my voice unto all."¹

Everything that happened in this area has profound implications for *your* lives. The restoration of the priesthood, along with the Lord's counsel to Emma, can guide and bless each of you. How I yearn for you to understand that the restoration of the priesthood is just as relevant to you as a woman as it is to any man. Because the Melchizedek Priesthood has been restored, both covenant-keeping women and men have access to "*all* the spiritual blessings of the church"² or, we might say, to all the spiritual treasures the Lord has for His children.

Every woman and every man who makes covenants with God and keeps those covenants, and who participates worthily in priesthood ordinances, has direct access to the power of God. Those who are endowed in the house of the Lord receive a gift of God's priesthood power by virtue of their covenant, along with a gift of knowledge to know how to draw upon that power.

The heavens are just as open to *women* who are endowed with God's power flowing from their priesthood covenants as they are to men who bear the priesthood. I pray that truth will register upon each of your hearts because I believe it will change your life. Sisters, you have the right to draw liberally upon the Savior's power to help your family and others you love.

Now, you might be saying to yourself, "This sounds wonderful, but how do I do it? How do I draw the Savior's power into my life?"

You won't find this process spelled out in any manual. The Holy Ghost will be your personal tutor as you seek to understand what the Lord would have you know and do. This process is neither quick nor easy, but it *is* spiritually invigorating. What could possibly be more exciting than to labor with the Spirit to understand God's power—priesthood power?

What I *can* tell you is that accessing the power of God in your life requires the same things that the Lord instructed Emma and each of you to do.

So, I invite you to study prayerfully section 25 of the Doctrine and Covenants and discover what the Holy Ghost will teach *you*. Your personal spiritual endeavor will bring you joy as you gain, understand, and use the power with which you have been endowed.

Part of this endeavor will require you to put aside many things of this world. Sometimes we speak almost casually about walking away from the world with its contention, pervasive temptations, and false philosophies. But *truly* doing so requires you to examine your life meticulously and regularly. As you do so, the Holy Ghost will prompt you about what is no longer needful, what is no longer worthy of your time and energy.

As you shift your focus away from worldly distractions, some things that seem important to you now will recede in priority. You will need to say no to some things, even though they may seem harmless. As you embark upon and continue this lifelong process of consecrating your life to the Lord, the changes in your perspective, feelings, and spiritual strength will amaze you!

Now a little word of warning. There are those who would undermine your ability to call upon the power of God. There are some who would have you doubt yourself and minimize your stellar spiritual capacity as a righteous woman.

Most certainly, the adversary does not want you to understand the covenant you made at baptism or the profound endowment of knowledge and power you have received or will receive in the temple—the house of the Lord. And Satan certainly does not want you to understand that every time you worthily serve and worship in the temple, you leave armed with God’s power and with His angels having “charge over” you.³

Satan and his minions will constantly contrive roadblocks to prevent you from understanding the spiritual gifts with which you have been and can be blessed. Unfortunately, some roadblocks may be the result of another’s misbehavior. It grieves me to think that any of you have felt marginalized or have not been believed by a priesthood leader or have been abused or betrayed by a husband, father, or a supposed friend. I feel deep sorrow that any of you have felt sidelined, disrespected, or misjudged. Such offenses have no place in the kingdom of God.

Conversely, it thrills me when I learn of priesthood leaders who eagerly seek the participation of women in ward and stake councils. I am inspired by each husband who demonstrates that his most important priesthood responsibility is to care for his wife.⁴ I praise that man who deeply respects his wife’s ability to receive revelation and treasures her as an equal partner in their marriage.

When a man understands the majesty and power of a righteous, seeking, endowed Latter-day Saint woman, is it any wonder that he feels like standing when she enters the room?

From the dawning of time, women have been blessed with a unique moral compass—the ability to distinguish right from wrong. This gift is enhanced in those who make and keep covenants. And it diminishes in those who willfully ignore the commandments of God.

I hasten to add that I do not absolve men in any way from God’s requirement for *them also* to distinguish between right and wrong. But my dear sisters, your ability to discern truth from error, to be society’s guardians of morality, is crucial in these latter days. And we depend upon you to teach others to do likewise. Let me be very clear about this: if the world loses the moral rectitude of its women, the world will *never* recover.

We Latter-day Saints are not of the world; we are of covenant Israel. We are called to prepare a people for the Second Coming of the Lord.

Now, may I clarify several additional points with respect to women and priesthood. When you are set apart to serve in a calling under the direction of one who holds priesthood keys—such as your bishop or stake president—you are given priesthood authority to function in that calling.

Similarly, in the holy temple you are authorized to perform and officiate in priesthood ordinances *every time* you attend. Your temple endowment prepares you to do so.

If you are endowed but not currently married to a man who bears the priesthood and someone says to you, “I’m sorry you don’t have the priesthood in your home,” please understand that that statement is incorrect. You may not have a priesthood *bearer* in your home, but you have received and made sacred covenants with God in His temple. From those covenants flows an endowment of His priesthood power upon you. And remember, if your husband should die, *you* would preside in your home.

As a righteous, endowed Latter-day Saint woman, you speak and teach with power and authority from God. Whether by exhortation or conversation, we need your voice teaching the doctrine of Christ. We need your input in family, ward, and stake councils. Your participation is essential and never ornamental!

My dear sisters, your power will increase as you serve others. Your prayers, fasting, time in the scriptures, service in the temple, and family history work will open the heavens to you.

I entreat you to study prayerfully *all* the truths you can find about priesthood power. You might begin with Doctrine and Covenants sections 84 and 107. Those sections will lead you to other passages. The scriptures and teachings by modern prophets, seers, and revelators are filled with these truths. As your understanding increases and as you exercise faith in the Lord and His priesthood power, your ability to draw upon this spiritual treasure that the Lord has made available will increase. As you do so, you will find yourselves better able to help create eternal families that are united, sealed in the temple of the Lord, and full of love for our Heavenly Father and for Jesus Christ.

All our efforts to minister to each other, proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead converge in the holy temple. We now have 166 temples throughout the world, and more are coming.

As you know, the Salt Lake Temple, Temple Square, and the adjoining plaza near the Church Office Building will be renewed in a project that will begin at the close of this year. *This* sacred temple must be preserved and prepared to inspire future generations, just as it has influenced us in this generation.

As the Church grows, more temples will be built so that more families can have access to that greatest of all blessings, that of eternal life.⁵ We regard a temple as *the* most sacred structure in the Church. Whenever plans are announced to construct a new temple, it becomes an important part of our history. As we have

discussed here tonight, you sisters are vital to the work of the temple, and the temple is where you will receive your highest spiritual treasures.

Please listen carefully and reverently as I will now announce plans to build eight new temples. If one is announced in a place that is meaningful to you, I suggest that you simply bow your head prayerfully with gratitude in your heart. We are pleased to announce plans to construct temples in the following locations: Freetown, Sierra Leone; Orem, Utah; Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; Bentonville, Arkansas; Bacolod, Philippines; McAllen, Texas; Cobán, Guatemala; and Taylorsville, Utah. Thank you, dear sisters. We deeply appreciate your receipt of these plans and your reverent response.

Now, in closing, I would like to leave a blessing upon you, that you may understand the priesthood power with which you have been endowed and that you will augment that power by exercising your faith in the Lord and in His power.

Dear sisters, with deep respect and gratitude, I express my love for you. Humbly, I declare that God lives! Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.