



**By President
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FAMILIES CAN BE TOGETHER Forever

The priesthood power to bind families eternally is one of the greatest gifts of God. Every person who understands the plan of salvation longs for that lasting blessing. Only in sealing ceremonies performed in dedicated temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does God offer the promise that families can be bound together forever.

The priesthood keys that make this possible were restored to the earth by the prophet Elijah to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple. Those priesthood keys have been passed in an unbroken line through living prophets in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the present day.

The Savior in His mortal ministry spoke of the power to seal families in words to Peter, His chief Apostle, when He said, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

It is only in the celestial kingdom that we can live in families forever. There we can be in families in the presence of our Heavenly Father and the Savior. The Prophet Joseph Smith described that wonderful experience this way in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“When the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man like ourselves.

“And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C 130:1–2).

This scripture suggests that we can with confidence aim for a heavenly standard in our relationships within our families. We can care enough about our family members, living and dead, to do all that we can to offer them the priesthood ordinances that will bind us in heaven.

Many of you, young and old, are doing that. You have looked for names of ancestors who have not yet received the ordinances that can seal you together.

Almost all of you have living relatives who have not been sealed in families by priesthood power. Many have living relatives who have received priesthood ordinances but are not keeping the covenants they made with God. God will bless you that you will be able to help reach out to all of those relatives in faith. You have a promise that the Lord makes to His disciples who go to bring others to Him:

“And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

From my office window I see brides and grooms every day having their pictures taken among beautiful flowers and shooting fountains. The groom often carries his bride



in his arms, at least for a few staggering steps, while the photographer shoots wedding pictures. Every time I see that, I think of couples I have known who in time—sometimes in a very short time after their wedding day—had to carry each other in other ways when life became hard. Jobs can

be lost. Children can be born with great challenges. Illness can come. And then, habits of having done unto others as we would have them do unto us—when it was easier—will make us heroes and heroines in those trying times when it takes more than we thought we had in us.

We owe our families the kind of relationship we can take into the presence of God. We must try not to give offense or take offense. We can determine to forgive quickly and fully. We can try to seek the happiness of others above our own. We can be kind in our speech. As we try to do all these things, we will invite the Holy Ghost into our families and into our lives.

My assurance to you is that, with the Lord's help and with repentant hearts, we can catch a glimpse in this life of the kind of life we want to have forever. Heavenly Father loves us. He wants us back with Him. The Savior, through the power of His Atonement, makes possible the change in our hearts we need to make in order to enter holy temples, make covenants we can then keep, and in time live in families forever in celestial glory—home again. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

As you share the doctrine of eternal families, consider what Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "Always seek to strengthen families. Teach with a vision of the importance of families being sealed in the temple. . . . When you have the vision of the sealing ordinances of the temple, you will help build the kingdom of God on earth" ("I Have Given You an

Example," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 34). How can you help those you teach develop a vision of the importance of being sealed in the temple? Invite those who have not yet been sealed to discuss steps they could take toward that ordinance. Invite those who have been sealed to discuss how they can keep the vision of their eternal family and work to improve their relationships with one another.