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How the Priesthood Blesses Youth

We are given the opportunity to minister like angels, to preach the gospel on all the continents of the earth, and to help souls come unto Christ.

Brothers and sisters, I am truly grateful to speak to you on this historic evening about the sacred gift of the priesthood and the marvelous power it has to bless the youth in this dispensation. I pray that despite my imperfections, the Spirit will assist me in teaching truth.

The First Presidency has reminded holders of the Aaronic Priesthood that “you live in a day of great opportunities and challenges—a day in which the priesthood has been restored. You have the authority to administer the ordinances of the Aaronic Priesthood. As you prayerfully and worthily exercise that authority, you will greatly bless the lives of those around you.”¹ As the young men of the Church, we are also reminded that we are “beloved [sons] of God, and He has a work for [us] to do,”² and we assist in His work “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

The priesthood is the authority to administer the ordinances and covenants of the Savior’s gospel to those who are worthy to receive them. Through these priesthood ordinances

and sacred covenants come the full blessings of the Savior’s Atonement, which helps us achieve our divine destiny.

Joseph Smith was a young man who was called of God to restore the gospel of Jesus Christ and, for that purpose, was given the priesthood, which he used to bless all mankind. Doctrine and Covenants 135 cites many of the blessings Joseph has given the youth of this dispensation. We read: “Joseph Smith . . . has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any

other man that ever lived in it. . . . He has brought forth the Book of Mormon . . . ; has sent the fulness of the everlasting gospel . . . to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose [the] Doctrine and Covenants . . . ; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, . . . and left a fame and name that cannot be slain” (Doctrine and Covenants 135:3).

To effectively serve like Joseph did, we must worthily qualify to use the Lord’s priesthood power. While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph and Oliver Cowdery wanted to be baptized, but they lacked the proper authority. On May 15, 1829, they knelt in prayer and were visited by John the Baptist, who gave them the keys and authority of the Aaronic Priesthood, saying, “Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” (Doctrine and Covenants 13:1).

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gospel on all the continents of the earth, and to help souls come unto Christ. This service places us in joint labor with John the Baptist, Moroni, Joseph Smith, President Russell M. Nelson, and other diligent servants of the Lord.

Our service in and with His priesthood brings together those who are dedicated to following and living the Lord's teachings with exactness, which I personally know can be difficult as we face the challenges of youth. But uniting with these fellow servants of the Lord in accomplishing His work will help to strengthen us against the adversary's temptations and deceptions. You can be a beacon of light to all those who are unsure of themselves. The light within you will shine so bright that everyone you interact with will be blessed by just being in your company. It may be hard at times to acknowledge the presence of our spiritual companions, but I am grateful to know that I am a member of a faithful priesthood quorum with whom I can work to grow closer to Christ.

Along with our friends and family, the Holy Ghost is one of our most loyal and reliable companions. But in order to invite His constant companionship, we must place ourselves in situations and places where He will want to be present. This can begin in our own homes as we work to make them holy places by participating in daily scripture study and prayer as a family and, more important, as we personally study the scriptures and pray on our own.

Earlier this year, I was provided with an exciting yet humbling opportunity to help my little sister, Oceane, progress on the covenant path by accepting the invitation to be baptized



and fulfill one of the prescribed requirements to enter the celestial kingdom. She postponed her baptism one month, until I was ordained a priest, to give me the privilege to perform the ordinance, while our other sisters were also privileged to work under priesthood assignment and stand as witnesses. As we stood on opposite sides of the font and prepared to enter the water, I noticed her excitement, as it matched mine. And I felt united with her, seeing that she was making the right decision. This opportunity to exercise the priesthood required me to be more careful and less casual in my gospel living. In order to prepare, I went to the temple every day that week, supported by my mom, grandma, and sister, to perform baptisms for the dead.

This experience taught me a lot about the priesthood and how I could exercise it worthily. I know that all priesthood holders can feel the same things I felt if we follow Nephi's example to "go and do" (see 1 Nephi 3:7). We cannot sit idly and expect the Lord to use us in His great work. We must not wait for those who need our aid to seek us out; it is our duty as priesthood holders to exemplify and stand as witnesses of God. If we

are making decisions that inhibit us from our eternal progression, we must change now. Satan will try his hardest to keep us in a carnal state of seeking simple pleasures. But I know that if we put in the effort, find those who will support us, and repent each day, the resulting blessings will be incredible and our lives will be forever changed as we press forward on the covenant path.

I know that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ, who is our Savior and has delegated the keys of the priesthood to His Apostles, who use it to guide us, especially in these challenging days, and to prepare the world for His return.

I know that Joseph Smith was the prophet of the Restoration and that President Nelson is our living prophet today. I invite all of us to study the lives of these great priesthood holders and seek to improve ourselves daily so we can be ready to meet our Maker. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. The First Presidency, in *Fulfilling My Duty to God* (booklet, 2010), 5.
2. Aaronic Priesthood quorum theme, in *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 10.1.2, ChurchofJesusChrist.org.