

A Gift of Love

By Faith S. Watson

As my husband blessed our baby daughter, I began to glimpse the depth and breadth of Heavenly Father's gift of love—the priesthood.

I was a new member of the Church, a new wife, and now a new mother. It was fast Sunday, and our tiny daughter was about to receive a name and a blessing. I had never seen a baby blessing before because we lived in a ward with few young families. I didn't know what to expect. Yet I felt by the Spirit that this was something very special and significant.

My husband, joined by other reverent priesthood holders, carefully cradled our precious little daughter. The sweetness of the Spirit filled me with joy. Tears ran down my cheeks, and myriad impressions flooded my mind. I knew I was only beginning to glimpse the depth and breadth of Heavenly Father's magnificent gift of love to us—the priesthood.

When the missionaries taught me the discussions, I had sensed how honored they felt to bear the priesthood. I had heard it in their words and in their prayers, including when they blessed me to overcome a challenge with the Word of Wisdom. I felt their hands, gently laid on my head,

begin to tremble as they spoke words I knew were coming from the Lord—words of love and of healing.

Soon I was baptized, and priesthood holders' hands were again laid upon my head. I was confirmed a member of the Lord's Church, and the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred upon me. I was cleansed and born anew. I felt the power of the priesthood throughout my entire body, and for the first time in my life, I knew joy.

Shortly after my baptism, my husband and I were married. His parents were members of the Church and his home was centered in the gospel, but I knew his testimony was not well rooted. I was not worried, though. My young faith brimmed with optimism. I would simply love him and be patient and prayerful.

During the months I carried our firstborn, I felt as mothers do—so close to my little one, so full of the wonder at this new life within me. When our daughter was born, my bond with her had become a cord of love, strong and sweet.

But I was concerned for my husband. He hadn't had the blessing of this intense closeness to our daughter that I had enjoyed. Of course he loved her, but I wondered and worried about whether a strong bond would develop between him and her. I worried as I spent time nursing her, bathing her, and holding her, while most of my husband's time was occupied with working to support our family.

Now, a few weeks after her birth, there we were in our chapel. A miracle was unfolding before my eyes and in my heart. My tentative husband humbly smiled at his brethren in the circle, his eyes full of light and a glint of tears. In return, love and support flowed from those brethren to him as they placed hands on shoulders and helped cradle our baby, forming a little circle bathed in pure and sacred love. As my husband began the blessing, I heard trembling in his voice, and I knew that he was feeling the Lord's power and the honor of holding His priesthood.

I felt a great love welling up in him for our little girl, and I knew he



had tried hard to prepare himself to give her the blessing Heavenly Father intended for her. My joy was full as I realized that he now felt tightly bonded to our daughter. It was a bond that was never to weaken.

Years have passed since that experience. Countless times I have witnessed and felt the power and beauty of the priesthood

exercised in so many ways, in so many places, and for so many of Heavenly Father's children. I have watched beautiful saving ordinances bestowed and hearts filled. I have observed cleansing, healing, comforting, and teaching. I have seen and felt burdens lifted.

I know I still don't understand the full magnificence of the priesthood,

but every baby blessing I have viewed has filled me with the same awe I felt during my firstborn's blessing. I am awed at the love Heavenly Father has shown by sharing His power with us, and I am filled with gratitude beyond words for my testimony of Him, His Beloved Son, and our beautiful restored gospel. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.