



By Elder Kent F. Richards  
Of the Seventy

# The Power of Godliness

*Each temple is God’s holy, sacred house, and therein each of us may learn and know the powers of godliness.*

Just a few months before the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, he met with the Twelve Apostles to talk about the greatest needs the Church was facing in that very difficult time. He told them, “*We need the temple more than anything else.*”<sup>1</sup> Surely, today in these trying times, each of us and our families need the temple more than anything else.

During a recent temple dedication, I was thrilled with the entire experience. I loved the open house, greeting many of the visitors who came to see the temple; the cultural celebration with the vibrancy and excitement of the youth; followed by the wonderful dedicatory sessions. The Spirit was sweet. Many people were blessed. And then the next morning, my wife and I entered the baptismal font to participate in baptisms for some of our own ancestors. As I raised my arm to begin the ordinance, I was nearly overcome by the power of the Spirit. I realized again that the real power of the temple is in the ordinances.

As the Lord has revealed, the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood is found in the temple and its ordinances, “for therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory.”<sup>2</sup> “Therefore, in the

ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.”<sup>3</sup> This promise is for you and for your family.

Our responsibility is to “receive” that which our Father offers.<sup>4</sup> “For unto him that receiveth it shall be given more abundantly, even power”:<sup>5</sup> power to receive *all* that He can and will give us—now and eternally;<sup>6</sup> power to become sons and daughters of God,<sup>7</sup> to know “the powers of heaven,”<sup>8</sup> to speak in His name,<sup>9</sup> and to receive “the power of [His] Spirit.”<sup>10</sup> These powers become available personally to each



one of us through the ordinances and the covenants of the temple.

Nephi saw our day in his great vision: “I, Nephi, beheld the *power* of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the *covenant people* of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were *armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.*”<sup>11</sup>

I had the privilege recently of being in a temple open house with President Russell M. Nelson and his family as he gathered them around the sealing altar and explained to them that everything we do in the Church—every meeting, activity, lesson, and service—is to prepare each of us to come to the temple and kneel at the altar to receive all the Father’s promised blessings for eternity.<sup>12</sup>

As we feel the blessings of the temple in our own lives, our hearts turn to our families, both living and dead.

Recently, I witnessed a three-generation family participate in baptisms together for their ancestors. Even the grandmother participated—though she had some trepidation about going under the water herself. As she emerged from the water and hugged her husband, she had tears of joy. The grandfather and father then baptized each other and many of the grandchildren. What greater joy could a family experience together? Each temple has a family priority time to allow you as a family to schedule time in the baptistry.

Shortly before his death, President Joseph F. Smith received the vision of the redemption of the dead. He taught that those who are in the spirit world are fully dependent upon the ordinances that we receive on their behalf. The scripture reads, “The dead who

repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God.”<sup>13</sup> We receive the ordinances in their behalf, but they make and are held accountable for each covenant associated with each ordinance. Surely, the veil is thin for us and parts completely for them in the temple.

What then is our personal responsibility to be engaged in this work, both as patrons and as workers? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught the Saints in 1840 that “considerable exertion must be made, and means will be required—and as the work [to build the temple] must be hastened in righteousness, it behooves the Saints to weigh the importance of these things, in their minds, . . . and then take such steps as are necessary to carry them into operation; and arming themselves with courage, resolve to do all they can, and feel themselves as much interested as though the whole labor depended on themselves alone.”<sup>14</sup>

In the book of Revelation we read: “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”<sup>15</sup>

Can’t you just see in your mind’s eye those who serve in the temple today?

There are more than 120,000 ordinance workers in the 150 operating temples around the world. Yet there is opportunity for even more to have this sweet experience. When President Gordon B. Hinckley announced the concept of many smaller temples throughout the world, he taught that “all ordinance workers would be local



people who would serve in other capacities in their wards and stakes.”<sup>16</sup> Normally, workers are called to serve for two to three years, with the possibility of extending beyond. It is not intended that once you are called, you will stay as long as you are able. Many long-serving workers carry their love for the temple with them as they are released and allow other, new workers to serve.

Nearly 100 years ago, Apostle John A. Widtsoe taught: “We need more workers to accomplish [this] wonderful work. . . . We need more converts to temple work, drawn from all ages. . . . The time has come, . . . in this new

temple movement, to bring into active service all the people, of all ages. . . . Temple work is . . . of as much benefit to the young and the active, as it is to the aged, who have laid behind them many of the burdens of life. The young man needs his place in the temple even more than his father and his grandfather, who are steadied by a life of experience; and the young girl just entering life, needs the spirit, influence and direction that come from participation in the temple ordinances.”<sup>17</sup>

In many temples, temple presidents are welcoming newly called and endowed missionaries, young men and women, to serve for just a short time as



ordination workers before going to the MTC. These young people are not only blessed to serve, but “they enhance the beauty and spirit for all serving in the temple.”<sup>18</sup>

I asked a number of young men and women who have served as ordination workers before and after their missions to share their feelings. They used phrases like the following to describe their experience in the temple:

When I serve in the temple—

- I feel “a sense of being closer to my Father and the Savior”;
- I feel “complete peace and happiness”;
- I have a feeling of “being home”;
- I receive “sacredness, power, and strength”;
- I feel “the importance of my sacred covenants”;
- “The temple has become a part of me”;
- “Those whom we serve are close during the ordinances”;
- “It gives me the strength to overcome temptations”; and
- “The temple has changed my life forever.”<sup>19</sup>

Serving in the temple is a rich and powerful experience for people of all ages. Even some newly married couples are serving together. President Nelson has taught, “Service in the

temple . . . is a sublime activity for a family.”<sup>20</sup> As ordination workers, in addition to receiving ordinances for your ancestors, you can also *officiate* in ordinances for them.

As President Wilford Woodruff said: “What greater calling can any man [or woman] have on the face of the earth than to hold in his [or her] hands power and authority to go forth and administer in the ordinances of salvation? . . .

“ . . . You become an instrument in the hands of God in the salvation of that soul. There is nothing given to the children of men that is equal to it.”<sup>21</sup>

He also said: “The sweet whisperings of the Holy Spirit will be given to [you] and the treasures of Heaven, the communion of angels, will be added from time to time.”<sup>22</sup>

“This is worth all you or I can sacrifice [during] the few years we have to spend here in the flesh.”<sup>23</sup>

President Thomas S. Monson recently reminded us that “the blessings of the temple are priceless.”<sup>24</sup> “No sacrifice is too great.”<sup>25</sup>

Come to the temple. Come often. Come with and for your family. Come, and help others to come too.

“What are these which are arrayed in white?” My brothers and sisters, *you* are they—you who have received the ordinances of the temple, who have kept your covenants even by sacrifice;

you who are helping your families find the blessings of temple service and who have helped others along the way. Thank you for your service. I testify that each temple is God’s holy, sacred house and that therein each of us may learn and know the powers of godliness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 416; emphasis added.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 124:34.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 84:20.
4. See Mark 4:20, 24–25.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 71:6.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:38: “And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.” These are the promises associated with the covenants in the temple ordinances; see also Doctrine and Covenants 132:20–24.
7. See Doctrine and Covenants 39:4; see also Doctrine and Covenants 45:8; Moses 6:65–68.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 121:36.
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 1:20: “But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world.”
10. Doctrine and Covenants 29:30.
11. 1 Nephi 14:14; emphasis added.
12. See Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 32; *Liahona*, July 2001, 37.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 138:58; see also verses 53–54.
14. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 415.
15. Revelation 7:13–15.
16. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Some Thoughts on Temples, Retention of Converts, and Missionary Service,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 49.
17. John A. Widtsoe, “Temple Worship,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Apr. 1921, 51–52.
18. Personal correspondence from President Brent Belliston, Boise Idaho Temple.
19. Personal correspondence.
20. Russell M. Nelson, “The Spirit of Elijah,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 86.
21. “Discourse by President Wilford Woodruff,” *Millennial Star*, May 14, 1896, 307.
22. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), xxx.
23. *Teachings: Wilford Woodruff*, 177.
24. Thomas S. Monson, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 93.
25. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 92.