

first hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ and coming into the faith. Surely that is why Jesus's final charge to the Twelve was just that basic—to “go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”⁸ Then, and only then, can the rest of the blessings of the gospel fully come—family solidarity, youth programs, priesthood promises, and ordinances flowing right up to the temple. But as Nephi testified, none of that can come until one has “enter[ed] into the . . . gate.”⁹ With all that there is to do along the path to eternal life, we need a lot more missionaries opening that gate and helping people through it.

From every man, young and old, who bears the priesthood, I ask for a stronger and more devoted voice, a voice not only against evil and him who is the personification of it, but a voice for good, a voice for the gospel, a voice for God. Brethren of all ages, unbind your tongues and watch your words work wonders in the lives of those “who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.”¹⁰

*Haste to the battle, quick to the field;
Truth is our helmet, buckler, and shield.
Stand by our colors; proudly they wave!
We're joyfully, joyfully marching
to our home.*¹¹

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Master, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:15.
2. “We Are All Enlisted,” *Hymns*, no. 250.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 84:44; see also Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4.
4. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 73.
5. 1 Nephi 8:28.
6. 2 Nephi 31:18.
7. *Hymns*, no. 250.
8. Matthew 28:19.
9. 2 Nephi 33:9.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 123:12.
11. *Hymns*, no. 250.



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The Power of the Aaronic Priesthood

You and the Aaronic Priesthood office you hold are essential to Heavenly Father's work with His children and the preparation of this earth for the Second Coming.

In a recent training session for General Authorities, President Thomas S. Monson emphasized anew the duties and opportunities for Aaronic Priesthood bearers.¹ It is in the spirit of that instruction that I address you.

Duty, properly carried out, determines the destiny of peoples and nations. So fundamental is the principle of duty that priesthood bearers are admonished, “Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.”²

President Monson explains, “The call of duty can come quietly as we who hold the priesthood respond to the assignments we receive.”³ President Monson quoted George Albert Smith: “It is your duty first of all to learn what the Lord wants and then by the power and strength of His holy Priesthood to magnify your calling in the presence of your fellows in such a way that the people will be glad to follow you.”⁴

Speaking of His duty, our Lord said: “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father.”⁵ “I came down from

heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”⁶ Because Jesus Christ performed His duty, “all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”⁷ Brethren, this is the standard we are to follow.

It has been my experience that you who serve as deacons, teachers, and priests are as willing, reliable, and capable in doing your duty as we expect you to be. We admire you. Your vitality is infectious, your abilities astounding, your association invigorating. You and the Aaronic Priesthood office you hold are essential to Heavenly Father's work with His children and the preparation of this earth for the Second Coming of His holy Son. Our vision of you and your duty looks beyond your age. Paul spoke of you, saying, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”⁸

*To men of old there came in time
The priesthood named for Aaron.
Through Levites, priests, and prophets too,
It served to bless God's children.*



*Then came the Savior of the world
And sought out one named John,
To be baptized by this same power
And mark salvation's dawn.*

*In latter days this selfsame power
Was again restored to earth,
That gospel truths from first to last
Might in one's soul find birth.*

*Aaronic Priesthood, truth sublime,
In preparation come—
That redemption might be had
Through God's Beloved Son!*

*And he who ministers these powers—
'Tis not a mere boy that can.
With priesthood mantle on him fixed
We say, "Behold the man!"⁹*

"The power and authority of the . . . Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments."¹⁰ President Boyd K. Packer has observed: "We have done very well at distributing the *authority* of the priesthood. We have priesthood authority planted nearly everywhere.

. . . But distributing the *authority* of the priesthood has raced, I think, ahead of distributing the *power* of the priesthood."¹¹ For the everlasting welfare of God's children, this must be remedied.

Our prophet has told us how this can be done. Quoting George Q. Cannon, President Monson said: "I want to see the power of the Priesthood strengthened. . . I want to see this strength and power diffused through the entire body of the Priesthood, reaching from the head down to the least and most humble deacon in the Church. Every man should seek for and enjoy the revelations of God, the light of heaven shining in his soul and giving unto him knowledge concerning his duties, concerning that portion of the work . . . that devolves upon him in his Priesthood."¹²

What can a deacon, teacher, or priest do to receive the spirit of revelation and magnify his calling? He can live so as to enjoy the cleansing, sanctifying, and illuminating power of the Holy Ghost.

The importance of this is found in these words from Alma: "Now I say unto you that this is the order after

which I am called, . . . to preach unto . . . the rising generation . . . that they must repent and be *born again*."¹³ When one is born again, his heart is changed. He has no appetite for things evil or unclean. He feels a deep and abiding love for God. He wants to be good, to serve others, and to keep the commandments.¹⁴

President Joseph F. Smith described his experience with this mighty change: "The feeling that came upon me was that of pure peace, of love and of light. I felt in my soul that if I had sinned . . . it had been forgiven me; that I was indeed cleansed from sin; my heart was touched and I felt that I would not injure the smallest insect beneath my feet. I felt as though I wanted to do good everywhere to everybody and to everything. I felt a newness of life, a newness of desire to do that which was right. There was not one particle of desire for evil left in my soul. I was but a little boy, it is true, . . . but this was the influence that came upon me, and I know that it was from God, and was and ever has been a living witness to me of my acceptance of the Lord."¹⁵

So we call upon you wonderful young brethren to diligently strive

to be “born again.”¹⁶ Pray for this mighty change in your life. Study the scriptures. Desire more than all else to know God and to become like His holy Son. Enjoy your youth but “put away childish things.”¹⁷

Shun profane and foolish chatter.

Flee all evil.

Avoid contention.

Repent where needed.¹⁸

This will help you rise to the noble stature of your manhood. The qualities of courage, trustworthiness, humility, faith, and goodness will be yours. Friends will admire you, parents will praise you, brethren in the priesthood will depend on you, and the young women will adore you and become even better because of you. God will honor you and endow your priesthood service with *power from on high*.

The rest of us will do our part. As parents and grandparents, we will prepare you for more valiant service in the kingdom of God. As your brethren, we will be examples for you to emulate. We will increase the strength of your quorums. We will sustain your quorum presidencies as they exercise their presiding keys. We will provide you opportunity to fully shoulder the duties of the Aaronic Priesthood and to magnify your calling therein.

Through your ministry, great blessings will come to the Church. “Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁹ You can do so as well. As you speak by the power of the Holy Ghost and administer the sacred emblems of the sacrament, men and women, boys and girls will strive to repent, to increase their faith in Christ, and to have the Holy Spirit with them always.

As you fast and collect fast offerings, members will be moved to pattern their works after the Savior. The Lord cared for the poor and the downtrodden, and He beckoned, “Come, follow me.”²⁰



Your service in caring for the less fortunate engages us in His holy work and helps us to retain the forgiveness for our own past sins.²¹

As you “visit the house of each member,”²² be not fearful or bashful. The Holy Ghost will supply you in the very moment the words to say, the testimony to bear, the service to render.

Your diligent efforts to “watch over the church always”²³ will be fruitful. Your unpretentious manner will disarm the most unbelieving heart and loosen the adversary’s grip. Your invitation for others to come to church with you, to partake of the sacrament with you, and to serve with you will become a welcoming balm for those lost in the shadows where the gospel light is but a dim ember or glows not at all.

Oh, my beloved young brethren, “neglect not the gift that is in thee,”²⁴ which you received when the Aaronic Priesthood was conferred and you were ordained.

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. . . . Be thou partaker of the . . . gospel according to the power of God;

“Who hath . . . called us with an holy calling, . . . which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”²⁵

Our beloved prophet has “called you to the colors.”²⁶ We salute you, pray for you, rejoice in serving with you, and give thanks to God for the power of your saving ministry.

I bear witness, God is our Eternal Father and dwells in yonder heavens. Jesus the Christ is God’s holy Son, the Redeemer of the world, and you faithful bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood are His emissaries on the earth, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, General Authority training meeting, Apr. 2010.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 107:99.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “The Sacred Call of Service,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 54.
4. George Albert Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 14; see also Thomas S. Monson, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 54.
5. John 5:30.
6. John 6:38.
7. Articles of Faith 1:3.
8. 1 Timothy 4:12.
9. Poem by Keith B. McMullin; see Keith B. McMullin, “Behold the Man,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 42.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 107:20.
11. Boyd K. Packer, “The Power of the Priesthood,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 7.
12. George Q. Cannon, *Deseret Weekly*, Nov. 2, 1889, 593; quoted by Thomas S. Monson in a General Authority training meeting, Apr. 2010.
13. Alma 5:49; emphasis added.
14. See Marion G. Romney, “According to the Covenants,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 71–73.
15. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 66.
16. See John 3:3–7; Alma 5:14–21, 49.
17. 1 Corinthians 13:11.
18. See 2 Timothy 2:16, 22–26.
19. 2 Nephi 32:3.
20. Luke 18:22; see also John 14:12–14.
21. See Mosiah 4:26.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 20:47.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 20:53.
24. 1 Timothy 4:14.
25. 2 Timothy 1:7–9.
26. Thomas S. Monson, General Authority training meeting, Apr. 2010.