

Saturday, April 3, 1999

Elder Ned B. Roueché

My dear brethren, I am humbled by this opportunity and ask for an interest in your faith and prayers. May we be blessed and guided by the Spirit to hear and feel this evening.

Example of reactivation

A number of years ago I received a telephone call that would change my life—my eternal life.

A good sister from my ward called to invite me to perform a dance floor show number at a Mutual activity evening that was being held in a couple of weeks. Dancing was a hobby of mine, and I was studying ballroom dancing at a studio in Salt Lake City. I had never been to a youth MIA dance before, and I was excited to accept the invitation to perform.

My partner and I arrived on the appointed evening and were greeted enthusiastically. I was surprised to find that we were the only ones on the program. It was an exciting experience, and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

The following Sunday morning, I decided to go to church in our ward for the first time since I was ordained a deacon. At that time none of my family was active. I found people who welcomed me warmly, and they demonstrated a genuine friendship and caring. These experiences started me on the road to activity and service in the Church that has been a joy to me throughout the years.

The senior Aaronic Priesthood committee, as it was called then, was a group of brethren who worked with men who were older than the normal Aaronic Priesthood age. These were just regular men who were doing what the Lord wanted them to do. They took me under their wing, and we became good friends. A wonderful returned missionary gave our class instruction. He taught the basics of the gospel and helped prepare me to serve a mission. During this same

time I was asked to help teach dancing in the ward, which gave me a feeling of being needed, and it also gave me a responsibility.

The next 15 months flew by, filled with growth and happiness as I progressed. I soon received a call to serve a mission in Mexico. I quickly grew to love the language, the country, and its people. Sharing the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ gave me a foundation upon which to build the rest of my life.

I know what it means to have a friend, a responsibility, and to be nurtured by the good word of God. There are many that do not understand what is missing in their lives and hunger for those tender feelings that come from knowing the love of our Savior. They are good people who lie dormant, as it were, awaiting the awakening of their soul by those who bring the “good news.” There are others who watch us, observe our examples, and say, “I like what I see; how can I become a part of it?”

“The worth of souls is great”

I invite you brethren of the priesthood, both young and old, to look around you, seek out, and extend a warm hand of friendship to those less active and nonmembers. Invite them to participate with you. Become their friend, and you will make a difference and bless their lives for generations to come.

“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

“For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

“And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance.

“And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!”¹

And may I add this wonderful promise of His: "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more."²

At this Easter season, as we celebrate His Resurrection, let us focus our attention on the price that He paid so willingly for all of those who will follow Him and do His will.

I invite all to come and enjoy these great blessings of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ that has been restored.

Let us cast aside the traditions of men, all the things that clutter our lives and lead us carefully away from what Moroni called "the right way,"³ and lift our hearts to Him who has ransomed us, even Jesus Christ our Savior, and follow Him.

Listen to the feelings of your heart and follow its prompting as you hear the messages of this conference. You will be taught from on high and receive answers to your prayers.

Let us go forth with greater enthusiasm to succor those in need and bring souls unto Him, that they may be fed, nurtured by His good word, and know His tender love. "You shall be laden with sheaves upon your back, for the laborer is worthy of his hire,"⁴ and there will be rejoicing in many hearts.

That evening so long ago when I was invited to share my talent, the door opened to a wonderful new world of friends and activity in the Church. I am grateful for those who reached out with a warm hand of fellowship, invited me in, nurtured me, and blessed my life.

I leave you with my witness that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. This is His Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 18:10-13.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 58:42.
3. Moroni 6:4.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 31:5.

Elder D. Lee Tobler

My beloved brethren of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood, this is a special blessing to stand at this pulpit where prophets and apostles of God and righteous and capable men and women have for many decades taught and counseled the members of the Church.

Help families without the priesthood

Tonight it is my humble desire to be a voice of encouragement to priesthood leaders, particularly to stake and ward councils, to increase their attention to the families in the Church who do not as yet have the blessing of the Melchizedek Priesthood in their homes. These are families where the father has not yet

received the priesthood, which is so necessary in blessing and guiding his family. For these families the fulness of the gospel—particularly the blessings of the temple—awaits not only their own efforts but also the loving efforts of Church members who already understand what the temple ordinances mean to the family.

Impact of priesthood in a home

As children we were raised in a home where it was clearly understood that the priesthood was as essential to life as was the water we drank to satisfy our thirst. My mother had experienced in her own family the joy of her large family coming into full Church activity and then