

hood power we collectively hold is the greatest force for good in the earth today. It is all exercised under the priesthood keys held by President Gordon B. Hinckley, who is the presiding high priest on the earth. I pray that we may be obedient to his inspired leadership and follow his example. May his remarkable ministry be extended for many years.

Brethren, I have been privileged, as boy and man, to enjoy the warm, comforting spiritual mantle of the holy priesthood for 68 years. I cannot express in words what a great and marvelous sustaining influence this has been to me and my family. Many times I have been less than I should have been. But in my weak way I have wanted to be deserving of this supernal blessing. So long as there is breath in my life, I want to be found testifying of the wonder and glory of the restored gospel with its priesthood keys and authority. May we be worthy of the Lord's promise, "Them that honour me I will honour," in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 1 Samuel 2:30.
2. Daniel 5:23.
3. See John 21:1-15.
4. Exodus 20:3.
5. Mark 12:30.
6. Exodus 20:7.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 107:4.
8. Exodus 20:3.
9. Quoted in Burton Stevenson, sel., *The Home Book of Quotations* (1934), 1350.
10. Lucile C. Tate, *LeGrand Richards: Beloved Apostle* (1982), 28.
11. Mark V. Hansen, "Are You Going to Help Me?" in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*,

ed. Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen (1993), 273-74.

12. 1 Samuel 2:30.
13. See *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:7.
14. *Doctrine and Covenants* 97:8.
15. See *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 602-3.
16. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 168.

The choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

President Monson

We remind you that the Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. tomorrow morning. The Sunday morning session will immediately follow. Daylight saving time begins tomorrow at 2:00 A.M. Remember, brethren, we encourage you to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to a combined Melchizedek Priesthood choir from stakes in Salt Lake for the beautiful music they provided this evening.

Following my remarks, it will be our privilege to listen to our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley. This session will conclude then with the choir singing "As the Dew from Heaven Distilling," and the benediction will then be offered by Elder H. Bruce Stucki of the Seventy.

President Thomas S. Monson

Be participants, not spectators

Mine is the overwhelming and humbling responsibility tonight to address you, my dear brethren who hold the

priesthood of God and who have assembled here in the Conference Center and throughout the world.

Some of you are deacons, perhaps newly ordained; others of you are high

priests who have served long and faithfully in sacred callings. All have assembled that we might better learn our duty.

Brethren, the world is in need of your help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save. The blessings of eternity await you. Yours is the privilege to be not spectators but participants on the stage of priesthood service.

President Wilford Woodruff declared: "All the organizations of the Priesthood have power. The Deacon has power, through the Priesthood which he holds. So has the Teacher. They have power to go before the Lord and have their prayers heard and answered, as well as the Prophet. . . . It is by this Priesthood that men have ordinances conferred upon them, that their sins are forgiven, and that they are redeemed. For this purpose it has been revealed and sealed upon our heads."¹

Once I heard from a newly ordained deacon soon after he had received the Aaronic Priesthood. He said, "Today is my first day to pass the sacrament. I can't wait. I know it is a very holy ordinance, so I'll treat it with care. I have a true testimony of the Church, and I hope to go on a mission soon."

Who will go to the rescue?

May I share with you tonight, brethren, a letter which I received some time ago, written by a husband who strayed far from the priesthood path of service and duty. It typifies the plea of too many of our brethren. He wrote:

"Dear President Monson:

"I had so much and now have so little. I am unhappy and feel as though I am failing in everything. The gospel has never left my heart, even though it has left my life. I ask for your prayers.

"Please don't forget those of us who are out here—the lost Latter-day Saints. I know where the Church is, but sometimes I think I need someone else to show

me the way, encourage me, take away my fear, and bear testimony to me."

While reading this letter, I returned in my thoughts to a visit to one of the great art galleries of the world—even the famed Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England. There, exquisitely framed, was a masterpiece painted in 1831 by Joseph Mallord William Turner. The painting features heavy-laden black clouds and the fury of a turbulent sea portending danger and death. A light from a stranded vessel gleams far off. In the foreground, tossed high by incoming waves of foaming water, is a large lifeboat. The men pull mightily on the oars as the lifeboat plunges into the tempest. On the shore there stand a wife and two children, wet with rain and whipped by wind. They gaze anxiously seaward. In my mind I abbreviated the name of the painting. To me, it became *To the Rescue*.

The Lord expects devotion to duty

Amidst the storms of life, danger lurks; and men, like boats, find themselves stranded and facing destruction. Who will man the lifeboats, leaving behind the comforts of home and family, and go to the rescue?

President John Taylor cautioned us, "If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty."²

Brethren, our task is not insurmountable. We are on the Lord's errand, and therefore we are entitled to the Lord's help. But we must try. From the stage play *Shenandoah* comes the spoken line which inspires: "If we don't try, then we don't do; and if we don't do, then why are we here?"

When the Master ministered among men, He called fishermen at Galilee to leave their nets and follow Him, declaring, "I will make you fishers of men."³ And so He did. Tonight He issues a call to each of us to "come join the ranks."⁴

He provides our battle plan with His admonition, "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence."⁵

I love and cherish the noble word *duty*. Let us hearken to the stirring reminder found in the epistle of James: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."⁶

There is an old song of my vintage. It's entitled "Wishing Will Make It So." It's not true. Wishing will *not* make it so. The Lord expects our thinking. He expects our action. He expects our labors. He expects our testimonies. He expects our devotion. Unfortunately there are those who have departed from the track of priesthood activity. Let us help them back to that path that leads to life eternal. Let us build that strong Melchizedek Priesthood base that will be the foundation of Church activity and growth. It will be the underpinning to strengthen every family, every home, every quorum in every land.

Brethren, we can reach out to those for whom we are responsible and bring them to the table of the Lord, there to feast on His word and to enjoy the companionship of His Spirit and be "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."⁷

The Lord changes lives

The passage of time has not altered the capacity of the Redeemer to change men's lives—our lives and the lives of those with whom we labor. As He said to the dead Lazarus, so He says today: "Come forth."⁸ Come forth from the despair of doubt. Come forth from the sorrow of sin. Come forth from the death of disbelief. Come forth to a newness of life. Come forth.

We will discover that those whom we serve, who have felt through our labors the touch of the Master's hand, somehow cannot explain the change which comes into their lives. There is a desire to serve

faithfully, to walk humbly, and to live more like the Savior. Having received their spiritual eyesight and glimpsed the promises of eternity, they echo the words of the blind man to whom Jesus restored sight, who said, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."⁹

How can we account for these miracles? Why the upsurge of activity in men long dormant? The poet, speaking of death, wrote, "God . . . touched him, and he slept."¹⁰ I say, speaking of this new birth, "God touched them, and they awakened."

Two fundamental reasons largely account for these changes of attitudes, of habits, of actions. First, men have been shown their eternal possibilities and have made the decision to achieve them. Men cannot really long rest content with mediocrity once they see excellence is within their reach.

Second, other men have followed the admonition of the Savior and have loved their neighbors as themselves and helped to bring their neighbors' dreams to fulfillment and their ambitions to realization.

The catalyst in this process has been—and will continue to be—the principle of love.

Shelley's miraculous change of heart

Another principle of truth which will guide us in our determination is that boys and men can change. I'm reminded of the words of a prison warden who taught this fact. A critic who knew of Warden Duffy's efforts to rehabilitate men said, "Don't you know that leopards can't change their spots?" Warden Duffy responded, "You should know I don't work with leopards. I work with men, and men change every day."

Many years ago, before leaving to become president of the Canadian Mission, headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, I had developed a friendship with a man by the name of Shelley, who lived in my ward but did not embrace the gospel, irrespec-

tive of the fact that his wife and children had done so. Shelley had been known as the toughest man in town when he was young. He was quite a pugilist. His fights were rarely in the ring but rather elsewhere. Try as I might, I could not bring about a change in Shelley's attitude. The task appeared hopeless. In time, Shelley and his family moved from our ward.

After I had returned from Canada and was called to the Twelve, I received a telephone call from Shelley. He said, "Will you seal my wife and me and our family in the Salt Lake Temple?"

I answered hesitatingly, "Shelley, you first must be a baptized member of the Church."

He laughed and responded, "Oh, I took care of that while you were in Canada. My home teacher was a school crossing guard, and every weekday as he and I would visit at the crossing, we would discuss the gospel."

The sealings were performed; a family was united; joy followed.

Befriend and love those you would lift

Abraham Lincoln offered this wise counsel, which surely applies to home teachers: "If you would win a man to your cause, *first* convince him that you are his sincere friend."¹¹

A friend makes more than a dutiful visit each month. A friend is more concerned about helping people than getting credit. A friend cares. A friend loves. A friend listens. And a friend reaches out.

There are brethren in every ward who seem to have a special skill and aptitude to penetrate the outer shell and reach the heart. Such was Raymond L. Egan, who served as my counselor in the bishopric. He loved to befriend and activate in the Church the father of a family and thereby bring into the fold a dear wife and precious children as well. This wonderful phenomenon occurred many times right up until Brother Egan departed mortality.

There are other ways as well by which one might lift and serve. On one occasion, I was speaking with a retired executive I had known for a long time. I asked him, "Ed, what are you doing in the Church?" He replied, "I have the best assignment in the ward. My responsibility is to help men who are unemployed find permanent employment. This year I have helped 12 of my brethren who were out of work to obtain good jobs. I have never been happier in my entire life." Short in stature, "Little Ed," as we affectionately called him, stood tall that evening as his eyes glistened and his voice quavered. He showed his love by helping those in need. He restored human dignity. He opened doors for those who knew not how to do so themselves.

I truly believe that those who have the ability to reach out and to lift up have found the formula descriptive of Brother Walter Stover—a man who spent his entire life in service to others. At Brother Stover's funeral, his son-in-law paid tribute to him in these words: "Walter Stover had the ability to see Christ in every face he encountered, and he treated each person accordingly." Legendary are his acts of compassionate help and his talent to lift heavenward every person whom he met. His guiding light was the Master's voice speaking, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . , ye have done it unto me."¹²

Learn the language of the Spirit

Brethren, acquire the language of the Spirit. It is not learned from textbooks written by men of letters, nor is it acquired through reading and memorization. The language of the Spirit comes to him who seeks with all his heart to know God and keep His divine commandments. Proficiency in this "language" permits one to breach barriers, overcome obstacles, and touch the human heart.

In a day of danger or a time of trial, such knowledge, such hope, such under-

standing bring comfort to a troubled soul and a grieving heart. Shadows of despair are dispelled by rays of hope; sorrow yields to joy; and the feeling of being lost in the crowd of life vanishes with the certain knowledge that our Heavenly Father is mindful of each of us.

In closing, I return to the painting by Turner. In a very real sense, those persons stranded on the vessel which had run aground in the storm-tossed sea are like many young men—and older men as well—who await rescue by those of us who have the priesthood responsibility to man the lifeboats. Their hearts yearn for help. Mothers and fathers pray for their sons. Wives and children plead to heaven that Daddy and others may be reached.

Tonight I pray that all of us who hold the priesthood may sense our responsibilities and, as one, follow our Leader—even the Lord Jesus Christ, and His prophet,

President Gordon B. Hinckley—to the rescue. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. In Brian H. Stuy, comp., *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 5 vols. (1987–92), 2:87.
2. *Deseret News: Semi-Weekly*, 6 Aug. 1878, 1.
3. Matthew 4:19.
4. “We Are All Enlisted,” *Hymns*, no. 250.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 107:99.
6. James 1:22.
7. Ephesians 2:19.
8. John 11:43.
9. John 9:25.
10. Alfred Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, section 85, stanza 5, line 4; spelling modernized.
11. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler, 8 vols. (1953), 1:273.
12. Matthew 25:40.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, before I begin my talk I want to congratulate very warmly this Melchizedek Priesthood choir, composed of men from many walks of life, all singing together out of their hearts filled with testimony of the hymns of Zion. Brethren, thank you very, very much.

The Perpetual Emigration Fund

Now, I seek the inspiration of the Lord as I speak briefly on what I consider to be a very important subject.

I begin by taking you back 150 years and more. In 1849 our forebears faced a serious problem. Our people had then been in the Salt Lake Valley for two years. Missionaries in the British Isles and Europe continued to gather converts. They came into the Church by the hundreds. When they were baptized, they desired to gather to Zion. Their strength and their

skills were needed here, and their wish to come was very strong. But many of them were distressingly poor, and they had no money with which to buy passage. How were they to get here?

Under the inspiration of the Lord, a plan was devised. What was known as the Perpetual Emigration Fund was established. Under this plan, funded by the Church, notwithstanding its serious poverty at that time, money was loaned to those members who had little or nothing. Loans were made with the understanding that when the converts arrived here, they would find employment, and as they were able to do so, they would pay off the loan. The money repaid would then be loaned to others to make it possible for them to emigrate. It was a revolving resource. It was truly a Perpetual Emigration Fund.

With the help of this fund, it is estimated that some 30,000 converts to the