

and it shall be given unto you. . . . For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”⁶

Church leaders express appreciation

The things I have spoken of today are not even a hundredth part of what is happening in villages and nations throughout the world. Everywhere I travel, expressions of profound gratitude are received. On behalf of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the Church Welfare Executive Committee, whose assignment it is to guide this work, may I express our deepest appreciation and admiration.

It is impossible for me to find the words to adequately express the sacred feelings burning within my soul. The simple word *thanks* seems almost trite. To each of you whose tender hearts and help-

ing hands have eased the burdens of so many, please accept my heartfelt gratitude. I invoke the Lord’s choicest blessings to be with you and your families as you continue to remember those with heavy hearts and hands that hang down, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Andrew Workman, in “Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” *Juvenile Instructor*, Oct. 15, 1892, 641.
2. Mosiah 18:8–9.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5.
4. Galatians 6:2.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 4–5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 6.
6. Luke 6:38.

The choir and congregation sang
“Now Let Us Rejoice.”

Sister Julie B. Beck

The priesthood is woven into our lives

In Kirtland, when the remaining priesthood keys were restored, the Lord said, “This is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people.”¹ I am grateful for the outpouring of blessings that has come to each of us through the priesthood of God. By the power of the priesthood, this world and everything in it, including each of us, were created. The priesthood is intricately woven into who we are and have ever been.² As sons and daughters of God, we each have unique responsibilities and roles, and through the blessings of the priesthood, we are all given equal partnership, gifts, and blessings.

Last fall our oldest granddaughter was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church. After she received the Holy Ghost, her newest sister was blessed and given a name. The following month, an-

other new granddaughter was named and blessed. Since then I have reflected often on the privileges those little girls enjoy because the priesthood of God has been restored.

I hope our granddaughters and grandsons grow up knowing that they are not and have never been third-party observers of the priesthood. The blessings of the priesthood, which “are available to men and women alike,”³ are woven in and through and around their lives. Each of them is blessed by sacred ordinances, and each of them can enjoy the blessings of spiritual gifts by virtue of the priesthood.

Priesthood ordinances bless members

All faithful members of the Lord’s Church are equally blessed by priesthood ordinances. The first ordinance⁴ in a child’s life usually takes place when he or she is a baby and is given a name and a blessing.

When children reach the age of accountability, they are baptized. There is not a separate baptism for boys and girls. The same baptismal ordinance is performed for a young girl and a young boy, who are baptized in the same font. When those children are confirmed and receive the Holy Ghost, the same power is given to each of them. They qualify for the help of that holy power through their faithfulness and not in any other way.

As members of the Church, we are equal before the Lord as we partake of the sacrament. Through our faith in Jesus Christ and the power of His Atonement made possible because of that ordinance, we can all repent and become better.

Each of us is equally entitled to a priesthood blessing when we are sick or need added support from the Lord in our lives. A young woman who desires a patriarchal blessing is equally entitled to know her lineage and potential as a young man her same age. The blessings that come to each of them through Abraham are powerful and important.

We teach all young men and young women to prepare to go to the temple so they can “receive the blessings of [the] fathers that [they] may be entitled to the highest blessings of the priesthood.”⁵ When one of my nieces received her temple endowment a few months ago, she exclaimed with joy: “I made it! All of my life I have been taught about preparing for the temple, and I made it!”

Every man and woman who is willing to serve the Lord and can qualify for a temple recommend makes covenants of obedience and sacrifice. Each is endowed “with power from on high.”⁶

Every elder and sister who receives a mission call is set apart to do the Lord’s work, and each is given authority to preach the gospel of Christ.

A man and a woman who enter into the full partnership of a covenant temple marriage share equally in the blessings of that covenant if they are faithful.⁷ The

Lord has said that their covenant will be in force after this life, and together they are promised power and exaltation.⁸

President Ezra Taft Benson said, “When our children obey the Lord and go to the temple to receive their blessings and enter into the marriage covenant, they enter into the same *order of the priesthood* that God instituted in the very beginning with father Adam.”⁹

I saw the power of priesthood blessings when I visited a family where the young father lay dying. Surrounding him were his wife and beautiful daughters. On each wall of that room was at least one picture of the family or the temple. The mother testified of their blessings when she said: “We are empowered and protected by our covenants. Our family will endure forever. The Lord is watching over us, and we are not alone.” All faithful members are equally blessed by the outpouring of blessings they receive through priesthood ordinances.

The blessings of spiritual gifts

Because the priesthood has been restored, we also share equally in the blessings of spiritual gifts. The Lord gives us these gifts for our own benefit¹⁰ and to help each other.¹¹

Moroni said that “there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them.

“For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom;

“And to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

“And to another, exceedingly great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit.”¹²

As I have tried to learn Spanish and remember Portuguese (which I knew as a child), I have prayed for and felt the help

of the Lord as I communicate in those tongues. I have heard other Church leaders and missionaries bear powerful testimonies in languages they have barely studied. I know people who are given the spiritual gift of a believing spirit. When they hear the gospel, it rings true in their hearts. I know others who are given the gift of wisdom or the ability to use knowledge in righteous ways. Some have the ability to work miracles, some are gifted healers, and others have great discernment.¹³

When I was a little girl, I often experienced serious illness. My father was always willing and worthy to use the priesthood power he held to bless me. But I have also felt that my mother's special gifts contributed to my healing. She was truly gifted in her ability to minister to my needs and help me get well. Her great faith that the Lord would lead her to answers about medical treatment was a comfort to me. How blessed I was to have two parents who lovingly used their spiritual gifts.

President Wilford Woodruff said that "it is the privilege of every man and woman in this kingdom to enjoy the spirit of prophecy, which is the Spirit of God; and to the faithful it reveals such things as are necessary for their comfort and consolation, and to guide them in their daily duties."¹⁴

The blessings of the priesthood make it possible for every person who is set apart to serve in any office in the Lord's Church to receive "authority, responsibility, and blessings connected with the office."¹⁵

Spiritual gifts are numerous and varied and come to us as we seek them and use them appropriately. We enjoy them because of the power of the Holy Ghost, which is in and around and woven through our lives.¹⁶

Priesthood blessings serve as equalizer

Through the blessings of the priesthood, the Lord shows us that He is "no

respector of persons."¹⁷ In my travels, I usually have the chance to visit members in their homes. Some of those homes are very basic dwellings. At first I would say to myself: "Why am I blessed with a house that has electricity and plumbing when this family does not even have water near their home? Does the Lord love them less than He loves me?"

Then one day I sat in a temple next to a sister who lives in a humble house. I spent two hours at her side. I looked often into her beautiful eyes and saw the love of the Lord in them. As we finished our work in the temple, I had a powerful realization. In all of the eternal blessings, in all of our most important privileges and opportunities, we were equals. I had been "baptized unto repentance,"¹⁸ and so had she. I had spiritual gifts, and so did she. I had the opportunity to repent, and so did she. I had received the Holy Ghost, and so had she. I had received temple ordinances, and so had she. If both of us had left this world together at that moment, we would have arrived equal before the Lord in our blessings and potential.

Priesthood blessings are the great equalizer. Those blessings are the same for men and women, for boys and girls; they are the same for married and single, rich and poor, for the intellectual and the illiterate, for the well-known and the obscure.

I am grateful that through the infinite fairness and love of God, all men and women were given equal partnership, gifts, blessings, and potential through priesthood ordinances and spiritual gifts. Because of the priesthood, which is woven in and around and through our lives, every power, every covenant we need to do our life's work and walk back to our heavenly home has been poured out upon our heads. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 110:10.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:36–45; Abraham 3.

3. Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 2005, 26; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 26.
4. See *Family Guidebook* (2001), 19.
5. Ezra Taft Benson, “What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 10.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 95:8.
7. See Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–2.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20.
9. *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 10.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 46:26.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 46:12.
12. Moroni 10:8–11.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 46:10–26.
14. *Deseret News*, July 30, 1862, 33.
15. Boyd K. Packer, “What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 10.
16. See Moroni 10:7–17.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 38:16.
18. Alma 9:27.

The choir sang “For the Beauty of the Earth.”

Elder Henry B. Eyring

A rock of safety in perilous times

The prophets of God have foreseen the times in which we live. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”¹ Anyone with eyes to see the signs of the times and ears to hear the words of prophets knows that the peril is great. The peril comes from the forces of wickedness. Those forces are increasing. And so it will become harder, not easier, to keep the covenants we must make to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For those of us who are concerned about such a future for ourselves and for those we love—in our families, in our quorums, and in our classes—there is hope in the promise the Lord has given us of a place of safety in the storms ahead. Here is a word picture of that place. You have read about it in scripture. It has been repeatedly described by living prophets. A loving father told his sons of it this way as he tried to strengthen them against the storms of temptation:

“And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty

winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation . . . whereon if men build they cannot fall.”²

King Benjamin’s last sermon

It has never been more important than it is now to understand how to build on that sure foundation. For me, there is no better place to look than in the last sermon of King Benjamin recorded in the Book of Mormon. Most of us have read it again recently and have pondered it more than once. King Benjamin could see us and our descendants. He knew by prophetic power what we face. He knew from his own experience the terrors of war. He had defended his people in combat, relying on the power of God. He saw clearly the terrible powers of Lucifer to tempt and to overcome us.

He was a great and a holy man. And he knew how to invite people to build on that rock of safety as well as any of the Lord’s prophets.