

questions for us all. They demonstrate the desire to receive.

### Intending to act

Third, those who receive by the Spirit *intend to act*. As the prophet Moroni instructed, to receive a witness of the Book of Mormon, we must ask “with real intent” (Moroni 10:4). The Spirit teaches when we honestly intend to do something about what we learn.

As I have read back over my journal entry to understand and learn more from the experience I had as a missionary, I have realized that although I had read in the Book of Mormon before, what happened

in Beaumont that morning was different because I was different. As inexperienced as I was, at least on that occasion I was sincerely trying to seek and to feel, and my intent was to act in faith on what I learned. I know now that such witnesses are available to each of us on a regular basis if we will receive them.

The Book of Mormon is the word of God. Jesus is the Christ. The gospel has been restored, and we truly are in the presence of modern apostles and prophets.

I pray that this day and always we will learn to better receive, that we may truly rejoice in both the gift and “in him who is the giver of the gift.”

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Craig A. Cardon

### Moving individuals closer to God

Years ago our young family moved into a home on what was then the edge of development in our community, which afforded a view of the mountains to the east. One Monday morning, just as I finished dressing and was ready to rush out the door to work, our six-year-old son, Craig, came bringing his four-year-old brother, Andrew, into the room by the hand. With determination Craig looked up at me and said, “Dad, yesterday in Primary my teacher told us that if you hold the priesthood, you can move mountains. I told Andy this, and he doesn’t believe me. You hold the priesthood, right, Dad?” Then turning his little body and pointing out the window, he looked back at me and said, “See those mountains over there? Show him, Dad!”

What followed was a sweet experience. How grateful I was for young sons who were beginning a lifetime of learning about the priesthood.

While the Lord truly taught those to whom He had given the priesthood that

by faith mountains would move<sup>1</sup>—and there are recorded instances of such<sup>2</sup>—my hope is to bring greater understanding to that aspect of the doctrine of the priesthood which *moves individuals* closer to God, affording them the opportunity to become like Him and live eternally in His presence. This doctrine involves both the sons and the daughters of God. Accordingly, I pray that what I share will be of help to both.

### Priesthood authority and ordinances

In 1823 the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith and quoted several scriptures, including the following from Malachi: “Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet.”<sup>3</sup> This first recorded reference to priesthood in this dispensation anticipated a process that would unfold in the decades to come.

In 1829 John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood,<sup>4</sup> followed shortly thereafter by Peter, James, and John restoring the Melchizedek Priesthood.<sup>5</sup>

In 1836 Moses and Elias restored the keys of the gathering of Israel and of the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham,<sup>6</sup> followed then by Elijah restoring the keys of sealing. The revelation then concludes with Elijah telling the Prophet Joseph, “Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands.”<sup>7</sup>

With all priesthood authority, offices, and keys again on earth, in 1841 the Lord emphasized to the Prophet the importance of building temples, where the Lord could make available to His children priesthood ordinances by which His sons and daughters would be prepared to return to His presence.<sup>8</sup>

He declared: “Let this house be built . . . that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto *my people*;

“For I deign to reveal . . . things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.”<sup>9</sup>

Earlier in Kirtland the Lord had taught the Prophet Joseph about the oath and covenant of the priesthood, explaining the conditions by which promised blessings are realized.<sup>10</sup> In Nauvoo, understanding grew as to the eternal scope and power of the priesthood<sup>11</sup> in blessing all His faithful children, whether in this life or the next.<sup>12</sup> While the priesthood is given to worthy sons of God, His daughters are also a part of His people to whom He reveals His priesthood ordinances. And the promised blessing of “all that [the] Father hath”<sup>13</sup> is available to both men and women who exercise faith in Jesus Christ, receive the ordinances, and endure in faith to the end. “Therefore, in the ordinances [of the Melchizedek Priesthood], the power of godliness is manifest.”<sup>14</sup>

The crowning temple ordinance is available only to a man *and* a woman when they are sealed together, forming an eternal family unit. It is by virtue of this and all other priesthood ordinances that the families of the earth shall be blessed.<sup>15</sup> This sealing ordinance is so central to the

Lord’s purposes that He has promised to the faithful who are not sealed in this life through no fault of their own this blessing in the life to come.<sup>16</sup> No other doctrine in all of religion better confirms God’s commensurate love for both His sons *and* His daughters.

### **Power to change our natures**

The priesthood also has the power to change our very natures. As Paul wrote, “All those who are ordained unto this priesthood are made like unto the Son of God.”<sup>17</sup> This likeness is not only in ordination and ordinance but also in the perfecting of individual hearts, something that occurs “in process of time”<sup>18</sup> as we “[yield] to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and [put] off the natural man.”<sup>19</sup> When a man is ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood, he enters into an “order”<sup>20</sup> by which he may be refined through service to others, especially his own family, and blessed by the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.<sup>21</sup>

The Lord instructed all of us when He taught that for priesthood bearers, unrighteousness brings an end to heavenly power or influence, while righteousness strengthens them. He identified qualities that “greatly enlarge the soul” as “persuasion, . . . long-suffering, . . . gentleness[,] . . . meekness, . . . love unfeigned[,] . . . kindness, and pure knowledge.”<sup>22</sup> He then added these instructive words: “Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.”<sup>23</sup>

It is significant that after inviting us to have charity toward “all men,” the Lord added the phrase “and to the household of faith.” Why? Doesn’t “all men” include the household of faith? Consider the implications when this added phrase is un-

derstood to mean more specifically “your very own household of faith.” Unfortunately, there are a few within the Church who exhibit greater charity toward non-family members than toward their own spouses and children, siblings and parents. They may show feigned kindness publicly while privately sowing and cultivating seeds of contention, demeaning those who should be closest to them. These things should not be.

The Lord then spoke of thoughts that are garnished—embellished and guarded—by virtue unceasingly. Such thoughts abhor sin.<sup>24</sup> They allow our communications to be “Yea, yea; Nay, nay,”<sup>25</sup> unencumbered by guile. They see the good and the potential in others, undeterred by the inevitable imperfections in others.

### As the dew from heaven

The verse concludes with a beautifully instructive reference to a distilling process. To better understand the application of these principles in the refinement of our personal lives, consider two glasses of water, each with the same outward appearance, placed in a room with high humidity. After a period of time, water begins to condense on one of the glasses because it is at a different temperature, occasioned by prior preparation not obvious initially, while the other glass remains dry and unaffected. Without compulsory means, the humidity is able to “flow unto”<sup>26</sup> the one glass, while the other receives nothing. In a similar way, qualities that greatly enlarge the soul; charity toward others, especially our families; and thoughts garnished with virtue adjust our spiritual temperatures to allow the doctrine of the priesthood to distill upon our souls.

So it is that the priesthood, through the workings of the Spirit, moves individuals closer to God through ordination, ordinances, and refinement of individual natures, thus affording God’s children the opportunity to become like Him and live

eternally in His presence—a work more glorious than moving mountains.<sup>27</sup>

I conclude by joining my prayer with that of Thomas Kelly, in words edited by Parley P. Pratt:

As the dew from heav’n distilling  
Gently on the grass descends  
And revives it, thus fulfilling  
What thy providence intends,

Let thy doctrine, Lord, so gracious,  
Thus descending from above,  
Blest by thee, prove efficacious  
To fulfill thy work of love.<sup>28</sup>

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. See Matthew 17:20.
2. See Ether 12:30; Moses 7:13; see also Jacob 4:6; Helaman 10:9.
3. Joseph Smith—History 1:38.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 13.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 18:9; 27:12.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–12.
7. See Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16.
8. As evidenced by the Prophet Joseph Smith’s instructions in the upper room of his store in Nauvoo, the Lord restored temple ordinances to the earth prior to revealing them or making them available to His people in the Nauvoo Temple, as He continues to do today in all His temples, accompanied by personal revelation and inspiration (see *History of the Church*, 5:1–2).
9. Doctrine and Covenants 124:40–41; italics added; see also vv. 31–32, 34, 39.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–42.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 128:8–9.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 137:7–9; see also *Preach My Gospel* (2004), 86.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 84:38.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 84:20.
15. See Abraham 2:11.
16. “The prophets have stated clearly that no blessing will be withheld from any of God’s sons or daughters if they love Him, have faith in Him, keep His commandments, and endure faithfully to the end” (M. Russell Ballard, *Counseling*

*with Our Councils: Learning to Minister Together in the Church and in the Family* [1997], 55). “All who qualify for [temple sealing and eternal family] blessings will, in the Lord’s due time, have them here or in the next life” (Richard G. Scott, in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 69).

17. Joseph Smith Translation, Hebrews 7:3; see also Moses 1:6.
18. Moses 7:21.
19. Mosiah 3:19.
20. Alma 13:2, 16; Doctrine and Covenants 107:3.
21. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79; 121:46.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–42.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45.
24. See Alma 13:12.
25. Matthew 5:37.

26. Doctrine and Covenants 121:46.

27. See Moses 1:39.

28. “As the Dew from Heaven Distilling,” *Hymns*, no. 149.

### President Monson

The choir and congregation will now sing “Come, Ye Children of the Lord.” Then Elders Don R. Clarke, Keith R. Edwards, and Larry W. Gibbons of the Seventy will address us. Following their remarks, we shall hear from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

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The choir and congregation sang  
“Come, Ye Children of the Lord.”

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## Elder Don R. Clarke

### Help for a blind farmer

My maternal grandfather, Alma Benjamin Larsen, was only 34 years old when he woke up one morning and noticed that he had problems seeing. Shortly thereafter, he lost his sight entirely. Grandfather had served a mission and been a faithful member of the Church. He was a farmer with a wife and three children, and he could not imagine life without sight. Grandfather’s wife and small children now had to bear the extra burdens of helping on the farm, and money became tight.

During this time of physical darkness, many people became instruments in God’s hands to help my blind grandfather. One experience that had a powerful impact on his family happened in 1919. It was a year of great financial difficulty for all the people in Grandfather’s town. Farms were being foreclosed, and businesses were going broke. There was a sizable mortgage on his farm, and Grandfather received a statement saying he would have to pay

\$195 in order to carry the mortgage over for another year. For him, paying this bill was like demanding a pound of flesh. Nearly everyone was in the same condition, and it seemed impossible to obtain that much money. If he had gathered everything that the farm produced—the horses, cows, and machinery—he could not have sold them for \$195. Grandfather asked a neighbor to butcher two or three of his cows, and he sold them and some other products. He had extended credit to his neighbors with the understanding that they would pay at the end of the year, but none of his debtors was able to pay him. The economic situation for his family was bleak.

In his journal, Grandfather recounts: “I shall never forget that cold evening, just before Christmas of 1919. It looked as though we would lose the farm. My daughter, Gladys, laid a slip of paper in my hand and said, ‘This came in the mail today.’ I took it to her mother and asked her what it was. This is what my wife read to me,