

*“Attaining, Accessing, Using Priesthood Power”*

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Sisters, as we contemplate this beautiful theme of how to attain and access and use the power of the priesthood, I’d like to express gratitude to my Father in Heaven for the immediate impressions that came to me. And I’m going to speak to you from the heart and will let the Lord lead.

Sisters, this is one of the most beautiful topics and doctrines that we could talk about. And yet most women, when they think of priesthood, they think of men. Isn’t that interesting. Check yourself. Priesthood? Oh, that’s a man thing. But I want to testify to you that priesthood and power of the priesthood is for you and is absolutely critical for the days ahead—absolutely critical. So I believe you’ve come to this session for a reason. And I pray that the Holy Ghost will confirm to you my words and also give you impressions of what you’re specifically to do with the priesthood of God.

The reason I say that is the priesthood of God can only be learned by revelation, by personal revelation. It’s interesting that we say, from Bruce R. McConkie, “the doctrine of the priesthood is known only by personal revelation. It comes line upon line.”<sup>1</sup> And then I love in Doctrine and Covenants 121 that “the doctrine of the priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.”<sup>2</sup> Does that apply just to men? Let’s contemplate that for a second.

I want to tell you a personal experience about how the Lord taught me by personal revelation about the priesthood and dimensions of it that I really had no idea of. I was serving the second time as a bishop at a BYU student married ward. This is where beautiful sons and daughters just got married, and it was nirvana to me—it was wonderful. They were so in love they couldn’t see straight, and they were starting their family together. But something happened. I noticed that immediately when after about a month or two, I would have some of the sisters come and visit with me as the bishop and say, “Bishop, he’s bugging me. He’s not listening to me,” and “What’s my role?” And for some reason, they were so talented, they had their own identity, and then when they got married, they lost their identity and they were struggling. And that was serious to me. So

I thought, you know, I need to really, prayerfully ask the Lord to help me, teach me, so I could teach them. And so for the next two months—literally two months—I pondered the roles of men and women in the priesthood, because I wanted to teach true doctrine.

What happened is, I ended up on a plane flight over to China—I was going to be there for two weeks. I had 17 hours to ponder on the plane. I remember getting into the hotel room at 1:30 in the morning, and I wasn't tired. That is not a good sign. And as I sat there trying to figure out what to do, the Spirit prompted me to write. So I got out my piece of paper, and I was ready to write. And the Spirit brought me a question. Now understand, I'm contemplating for 17 hours: How does God love His sons, and how does He love His daughters? He grants unto sons to hold the priesthood—but does He deny the power of the priesthood to His daughters? I was struggling in many, many ways. I was just pondering that. And as I was pondering, He brought this question to me. And I want to give that question to all of you. The Spirit in my mind simply said, very clearly, "Dave, in the body, which organ is the most important? Which organ is necessary to sustain the body, the life of the body?" I had never contemplated that before. And He said, "Is it the heart or the brain?" I didn't know, so I googled it. That's what you do about 2:00 in the morning, is you google it. And I realized that the heart actually lives longer than the brain.

But I learned something as I settled upon that question. Instead of the dews of heaven, it was the rain of heaven—and for two hours the Lord taught me. He taught me some very eternal and precious truths that I will forever treasure. And so I'm going to share with you none of those—you have to go find them out yourself. I'll give you a few hints.

Number one, the body cannot live without both of the two organs. And the body—the brain and the heart—must be one. It can't live without them. Think of the roles of men and women in the priesthood. See what the Lord is trying to teach me. It's interesting that when the Holy Ghost speaks truth and revelation, it speaks to the mind *and* the heart, and if it doesn't confirm it to both, we could be deceived. Isn't that interesting. Think of men and women, mind and heart. The very eternal plan of God requires both man and woman.

I've said this before, and I wasn't planning on saying this, but I just feel impressed that we don't understand the value of how important those roles are. And as I was in the temple this morning, I realized again how vitally important women are in bringing forth the kingdom of God and bringing about the very purposes of God—His work and His glory. You are divine, and you are beautiful. But some of you don't think that. Some of you don't view yourself as divine and beautiful, and you start to compare. Everything Satan is trying to do in the world is to compare and to cause you to think you are less than your divine role.

But I love to contemplate how the priesthood brings us to Christ. The priesthood, as we'll learn in a second, is the power of God. And if you'll notice a very important point, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, have two different roles. They are one in purpose, they are one in power, they are one in Spirit, but they are two distinct, separate personages, and they have two different roles. And the purpose of the priesthood is to bring a man and a woman unto Christ and to become one so that the eternal round of God

is fulfilled. It's when the mind becomes the mind of Christ and our heart becomes the heart of Christ that we start to understand the scripture of Zion: "They were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them."<sup>3</sup> Isn't that interesting.

I want to visually again show a very important, beautiful truth about the priesthood so that you understand that it's something that *you* must come unto—that you must receive the priesthood, understand it, and utilize the power. The priesthood—the Holy Priesthood—is God's priesthood, all power. And now notice, before the priesthood was called the Melchizedek Priesthood, the correct name was the Holy Priesthood after the order of the Son of God.<sup>4</sup> It's administered from the Father through Jesus Christ to us as His children. But notice that the third member of the Godhead is absolutely necessary for the conveyance, the sealing and the confirmation of priesthood power. And the Holy Ghost then provides the Holy Spirit of Promise to both men and women, speaking of power—priesthood power—so that we might act in the name of God. Have you ever thought of it that way, sisters? That the role of the Father through His Son, with the Holy Ghost, is to give us power to do things, to act in the name of God.

And so, let me focus on the word and definition of power. In Webster it simply says, "the ability to do something or to act." That's a keyword, *act*. And then the definition that was shared by President Faust in a beautiful talk: "Priesthood power is the power and authority delegated by God to act in His name for the salvation of His children."<sup>5</sup> This was so beautifully taught by Elder Oaks in the priesthood session of general conference.<sup>6</sup> You need to read that and fully understand what the prophets have been saying about priesthood power. And I'm not talking about priesthood keys—I'm talking about priesthood power, and how we unlock that power.

How do you as daughters of God act in His name? Now think priesthood. So let me give you—and we did not compare notes, Sister [Heidi] Swinton and I, but we're going to show you that the Lord wants you to understand that faith (she spoke of faith) is extremely important. I love the *Lectures on Faith*. In those lectures it says faith is a principle of action and power. "Faith, then, is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things: by it they exist, by it they are upheld, by it they are changed, or by it they remain, agreeably to the will of God." Here is a key point: "Without it, there is no power."<sup>7</sup> So when you think of priesthood power, I need you to start to think of the word faith, and then I need you to ask yourselves this question, sisters: Where is your faith? How strong is your faith?

Now real quick, how many of you have read the *Lectures on Faith* as women? Thank you. When I say that, I have very, very few hands that go up. I would like to submit to you sisters that that is something that you should study and ponder and reflect deeply upon. The *Lectures on Faith* were prepared specifically for the School of the Prophets in Kirtland. Orson Hyde was assigned to teach the school. The Prophet Joseph Smith oversaw that beautiful curriculum, and just a word—men were not the only ones that attended the School of the Prophets. That beautiful doctrine is something that you should study and learn.

So let me talk about priesthood and power. Priesthood—this is from Bruce R. McConkie—“Priesthood is power like none other on earth . . . It is the very power of God himself.” Skipping down, “It is the power of faith, the faith by which the Father creates and governs. God is God because he is the embodiment of all faith and all power and all priesthood.” So you’re starting to connect those—faith, power and priesthood. Notice this—this is one of my favorite quotes: “Faith and priesthood go hand in hand. Faith is power and power is priesthood.”<sup>8</sup> Now I’m going to stop here for a second. Remember, I started out with whenever we say priesthood, you put it off, ‘That’s a man thing.’ I’m trying to bring it back and let you understand, sisters, that it’s your thing. It’s the very power of God that you need to tap into and understand and utilize.

“After we gain faith, we receive the priesthood. Then, though the priesthood, we grow in faith until, having all power, we become like our Lord.”<sup>9</sup> So the question, sisters, is where do women “receive the priesthood”? Have you ever thought of it that way? Where do you receive the priesthood? In Doctrine and Covenants 95:8, “Yea, verily I say unto you”—this is the Lord speaking—“I gave unto you a commandment that you should build a house, in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high.” What is that house, sisters? It’s the temple of our God. And those that attend that sacred place know that the doctrines of the priesthood truly distill upon your soul, and that God wants you to be endowed with power from on high.

I love this definition. “Our church doctrine places women equal to and yet different from men. God does not regard either gender as better or more important than the other. . . . When men and women go to the temple, they are . . . endowed with the same power, which is priesthood power.”<sup>10</sup> “Access to the power and the blessings of the priesthood is available to all of God’s children.”<sup>11</sup>

If I had one impression and desire, it was to instill upon your minds that the priesthood is yours, and that you have to learn to understand it and access it and draw upon it in your lives as women, especially women of the last days.

I want to just focus on the keys that unlock the power of the priesthood. Again, I’m focusing on priesthood power, and it’s given to men and women equally, priesthood power. The first key we’ve talked about is faith. Without faith there is no power. And ultimately it is the faith that God knows all things and that His will and His ways are higher than our ways—that beautiful, simple faith. The other key is righteousness. I cannot overemphasize how important obedience and righteousness are as one of the keys. You must have both keys to open up the doors of the temple and especially the powers of God and the priesthood.

And so what have we learned? The power of the priesthood can only be learned by revelation. It’s available to all of God’s children. And here are some key truths: that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Can I just give us a thought on that? Have miracles ceased? Have angels ceased to appear unto men and women?<sup>12</sup> If they have, what’s the reason? It’s because of unbelief. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

We need to draw upon the miracles that will come and are needed in the last days. He is no respecter of persons, and He gives to all men and women liberally, and upbraideth not. Those are the pillar truths that I love and base everything on.

So just as Sister Swinton talked about the beautiful experience of this woman who reached out and touched the hem of the Savior, can I just give you my testimony and understanding as that came to me? Did she hold the priesthood? Did the Savior turn around and put His hands on her and give her a blessing? Do you remember that story? She is the one who literally touched and drew virtue and power from the Savior. Women, you can do that. That's the priesthood power, if you have faith and if you have the keys. Do you believe that?

I love the part where as she acted—and I want to focus on action—that she heard of Jesus, then she came and she touched. She had to do something instead of just saying, “How come I can't be healed?” Imagine how many times she went and waited for the Savior. Imagine what effort it took to find Him and to be in a position where she could even touch the hem. It takes work. It takes action. Faith is action.

I love this beautiful synopsis of all the miracles of Christ. It says, “And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him.” Faith, action. “And Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.”<sup>13</sup> Now the question I have for all of us today, sisters, is do we believe that Jesus Christ can still do that?

I want to just share a thought about faith and women and action. Can I just submit to you that if it was not for the faith and the seeds of faith that Luck Mack planted into the hearts of her children growing up, would the Prophet Joseph Smith as a young boy have believed in those words in James? Who planted the seed of faith? Whom did Joseph Smith believe and trust? It was his mother. That is the power, women, that you have. And that's why Satan is attacking you. And he's trying to cause you to doubt yourselves and your role, your divine role. You're not like men. Don't try to be like us. You don't want to be, trust me. You're you, and when you start to understand that question about the heart and the mind and that both must be one, then you start to understand that the power of the priesthood can flow through you to touch not just your children, but to change nations.

I just need to quickly share this story about Amanda Smith. This was the story where her husband was killed at Haun's Mill. Her son brought her younger son Alma to her—no hip. Imagine the blood, sisters—just imagine the experience. And Amanda Smith had a revelation. She prayed to the Lord. There was no priesthood there to give her a blessing—the men were killed, or they had run away. And so the Lord endowed her with a vision, and she understood how to heal her son. Now this is my favorite part of this. She said, “Alma, my child, do you believe that the Lord made your hip?” “Yes, Mother.” “Well, the Lord can make something there in the place of your hip, don't you believe that, Alma?” Now sisters, mothers, notice this next phrase. Here's an innocent child saying, “Do you think that the Lord can, Mother?” We need to have our seeds of faith so firm

and our roots of faith so deep that when our children come to us in times of turmoil, we can say, “Yes.”

Now I’m going to quickly go to the reason and the impressions that I’ve had for you beautiful sisters. Faith is the key, and righteousness, to priesthood power. “Never before in the history of the world has the need for faith in God been greater.” I hate to tell when that was given—that was April 2000. And then I love this where he said, “Any of us can be left behind, drawn away by the seductive voices of secularism and materialism” of the world.<sup>14</sup>

Sisters, what’s confronting our families? What’s confronting you? What’s hitting your faith? As a stake president, it frustrates me when people come in my office and they say, “I’ve lost my testimony. I don’t have a testimony anymore.” And I ask them, “Well, what happened?” And they say, “Well, I read something on the Internet.” And I say, “Well, can you tell me who wrote that on the Internet?” “Oh no, I don’t know who it is.” It’s interesting how we believe things on the Internet and we’ve never validated if that person is immoral or where they’re from. And so our faith has to be deeper and stronger.

In the last days, sisters, we must have faith. And this is how Moroni closed up the Book of Mormon, the last things that he could say. He said this: “And Christ truly said unto our fathers: If ye have faith ye can do all things which are expedient unto me. And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth—that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you, it shall be because of unbelief.”<sup>15</sup> Sisters, we need your faith. We need you to know who you are, that you’re divine daughters of God, and that with faith all things are possible—if you believe.

His last words were this: “Come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift . . . awake, and arise . . . love God with all your [heart] . . . then is His grace sufficient . . . and deny not His power.”<sup>16</sup> How many times do we deny the power of God because we never think to go and draw upon that power, to touch His hem, and to expect miracles? That is priesthood power.

I want to just give you a few thoughts on how to become women of faith. First of all, if the Spirit hasn’t prompted you already to go and find *Lectures on Faith*, can I just blatantly tell you to do that? Please do that. It’s a hard read. It’s not long, but you can just find it on the Internet and study the *Lectures on Faith*. It teaches you about the attributes and the characteristics of God. It’s beautiful. The next, sisters, is you need to practice and exercise your faith. It doesn’t just come. You actually have to seek the Lord, receive revelation, which will come, and then nurture that seed of faith. Then you need to ponder that question I gave you earlier: What is your role in the priesthood? And I will tell you right now, the only place on the earth that you can learn your role and the power of the priesthood is in the temple. It comes by personal revelation. And I testify that He will teach you.

I need to read this, and then I will close. “Someday, when the whole story of this and previous dispensations is told, it will be filled with courageous stories of our women, of

their wisdom and their devotion, their courage, for one senses that perhaps, just as women were the first at the sepulchre of the Lord Jesus Christ after his resurrection, our righteous women have so often been instinctively sensitive to things of eternal consequence.”<sup>17</sup> I hope the Spirit has impressed upon you how precious you are and how needed you are to bring about the great work of salvation.

My closing testimony is this. When Mary went to the sepulchre, she was there early in the morning. She noticed that the stone was taken away, and she ran—she didn’t look in, she ran and got Peter and John and told them. They ran. John was younger than Peter and outran him. As the Apostles looked in, they noticed the napkin and the cloth at the head and the foot of the tomb, and then they realized that the Savior was not there. And then the scripture says they went home. Now here’s my testimony for you sisters. As they went home, Mary was distraught and struggling, and so she looked in. But what did she see? She happened to see two angels. Now I believe those two angels were sitting there the whole time. Sometimes men don’t see things that women see. Isn’t that interesting that she saw the angels, and they said, “Woman, why weepest thou?”<sup>18</sup>

I testify to you that your eyes are unique, your roles are unique, and that the power of God is real—that God is a God of miracles, that He desires to endow us with power from on high. And I testify to you that God knows you. He needs you. And He has created you to bring about a beautiful work to prepare the earth for the Lord’s Second Coming. It is time, sisters, to arise, to put on your beautiful garments, you beautiful daughters of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, “The Doctrine of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 1982.

<sup>2</sup> D&C 121:45.

<sup>3</sup> Moses 7:18.

<sup>4</sup> D&C 107:3.

<sup>5</sup> James E. Faust, “Power of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 1997.

<sup>6</sup> See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2014.

<sup>7</sup> *Lectures on Faith 1*.

<sup>8</sup> McConkie, “The Doctrine of the Priesthood.”

<sup>9</sup> McConkie, “The Doctrine of the Priesthood.”

<sup>10</sup> M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women in the Work of the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2014.

<sup>12</sup> See Moroni 7:35–37.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 9:28–29.

<sup>14</sup> James E. Faust, “The Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Moroni 10:23–24.

<sup>16</sup> Moroni 10:30–33.

<sup>17</sup> Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, May 1978, 5.

<sup>18</sup> See John 20:1–13.