

## Episode 7

### Stories from General Conference

#### Priesthood Power

**NARRATOR:** **Priesthood Power is the topic of this series of stories from General Conference. Priesthood power may be defined as the authority God grants to men on earth to act in His name. In the Church, worthy male members are ordained to the priesthood. Priesthood holders can be authorized to preach the gospel, administer ordinances, and govern the kingdom of God on the earth. Priesthood power is exercised using faith. A humorous story was related by Elder Craig A. Cardon in the October 2006 General Conference.**

(Elder Craig A. Cardon, Sunday Afternoon Session, October 2006)

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!”

**NARRATOR:** **Certainly, God could have moved the mountain for a wise purpose, but priesthood power is normally exercised in more subtle ways. In the Priesthood session of the October 2000 General Conference, President Thomas S. Monson provided an example.**

(President Thomas S. Monson, Priesthood Session, October 2000)

I revere the priesthood of Almighty God. I have witnessed its power. I have seen its strength. I have marveled at the miracles it has wrought.

Fifty years ago, I knew a young man—even a priest—who held the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood. As the bishop, I was his quorum president. Robert stuttered and stammered, void of control. Self-conscious, shy, fearful of himself and all others, this impediment was devastating to him. Never did he fulfill an assignment; never would he

look another in the eye; always he would gaze downward. Then one day, through a set of unusual circumstances, he accepted an assignment to perform the priestly responsibility to baptize another.

I sat next to Robert in the baptistery of the Salt Lake Tabernacle. He was dressed in immaculate white, prepared for the ordinance he was to perform. I leaned over and asked him how he felt. He gazed at the floor and stuttered almost uncontrollably that he felt terrible, terrible.

We both prayed fervently that he would be made equal to his task. Suddenly the clerk said, “Nancy Ann McArthur will now be baptized by Robert Williams, a priest.”

Robert left my side, stepped into the font, took little Nancy by the hand and helped her into that water which cleanses human lives and provides a spiritual rebirth. He spoke the words, “Nancy Ann McArthur, having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.” Not once did he stutter! Not once did he falter! A modern miracle had been witnessed. Robert then performed the baptismal ordinance for two or three other children in the same fashion.

In the dressing room, as I congratulated Robert, I expected to hear this same uninterrupted flow of speech. I was wrong. He gazed downward and stammered his reply of gratitude.

To each of you brethren this evening, I testify that when Robert acted in the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood, he spoke with power, with conviction, and with heavenly help.

**NARRATOR:**

**Those who bear the priesthood should conduct themselves in a way that reflects that honor and privilege. Service to others is often emphasized as a way we can honor our priesthood power. In the October 2000 Priesthood session of General Conference, President Thomas S. Monson gave the following example.**

(President Thomas S. Monson, Priesthood Session, October 2000)

Those who bear the Aaronic Priesthood should be given opportunities to magnify their callings in that priesthood.

For example, when I was ordained a deacon, our bishopric stressed the sacred responsibility which was ours to pass the sacrament. Emphasized was proper dress, a dignified bearing, and the importance of being clean inside and out.

As we were taught the procedure in passing the sacrament, we were told that we were assisting every member in a renewal of the covenant of baptism, with its responsibilities and blessings. We were also told how we should assist a particular brother—Louis—who had a palsied condition, that he might have the opportunity to partake of the sacred emblems.

How I remember being assigned to pass the sacrament to the row where Louis sat. I was hesitant as I approached this wonderful brother, and then I saw his smile and the eager expression of gratitude that showed his desire to partake. Holding the tray in my left hand, I took a piece of bread and pressed it to his open lips. The water was later served in the same way. I felt I was on holy ground. And indeed I was. The privilege to pass the sacrament to Louis made better deacons of us all.

**NARRATOR: Another way priesthood power is exercised is through priesthood blessings. In the October 2003 Priesthood Session of General Conference, Elder Merrill J. Bateman related the following account of a blessing with a later unexpected twist.**

(Elder Merrill J. Bateman, Priesthood Session, October 2003)

Many years ago, our family had an experience which left an indelible impression as to the importance and value and power of a father's blessing. The lessons learned may be of interest to you.

When our oldest children were ready to begin formal schooling, Sister Bateman and I decided that a father's blessing would be given each child at the beginning of the school year. The family home evening preceding the start of school would be the occasion. The year our oldest son, Michael, entered the third grade holds special memories for us. During the preceding summer he had participated in Little League baseball. He loved the sport. When we gathered for family home evening just before the start of school, Michael announced that he did not need a blessing. He had completed his first season in Little League, and blessings were for younger children.

Sister Bateman and I were stunned. We encouraged him, suggesting that a blessing would help him with his schoolwork. It would be a protection to him. It would help him in his relations with his brothers, sisters, and friends. Our encouragement, along with some coaxing, failed. He was too old. Believing in the principle of agency, we were not about to force a blessing on an eight-year-old. All of the children except Michael received a blessing that year.

The school year proceeded normally. Michael and the other children did well in school, and the family enjoyed their associations together. Then the following May arrived, and it was time for Little League baseball to begin. Following the last day of school, Michael's coach called a team practice. Michael's anticipation could not have been greater. His dream was about to be realized. He was to be the starting catcher. The baseball diamond was only a few blocks from our home. The boys and the coach walked to the baseball field, crossing a busy highway. Following the practice, the boys and coach started for home. Michael and a friend ran on ahead of the coach and the other boys. As the two boys approached the busy highway, Michael failed to look and darted in front of a car driven by a 16-year-old young man out for his first drive. Can you imagine the fear that must have struck the young man's heart? He slammed on the brakes and swerved in an

attempt to miss the boy. Unfortunately, the side of the front fender and bumper hit Michael and threw him down the highway.

A short time later, Sister Bateman and I received a telephone call from the police. Michael, in critical condition, was in an ambulance on his way to the hospital. It was important that we hurry. Before leaving, I called a friend and asked him to meet us at the hospital and assist in giving a blessing. The 20-minute drive was the longest of our lives. We prayed fervently for the life of our son and to know the will of the Lord.

As we parked the car by the door of the emergency room, we saw a policeman exiting with a young man who was crying. The policeman recognized us and introduced the young man as the driver of the car. We knew enough of the story to put our arms around him and tell him that we knew it was not his fault. We then entered the hospital to find Michael. As we entered his room, the doctors and nurses were working feverishly, attending to his needs. My friend had arrived, and we asked if it would be possible to have two or three minutes alone with him. My priesthood brother anointed, and I sealed. As I laid my hands upon Michael's head, a feeling of comfort and peace came over me, words flowed, and promises were made. He was then rushed to the operating room.

For the next four weeks, Michael lay in a hospital bed with his head bandaged and his leg in traction. Each Wednesday, his Little League teammates would visit him after the game and give him a report. Each Wednesday, tears would well up in Michael's eyes and run down his cheeks as the boys relived the game. After four weeks in traction, Michael was put in a body cast from his chest to his toes. On two or three occasions we took him to a game to watch his friends play. Another four weeks passed, and the body cast was replaced with a cast from his hip to his toes. Two days before school was to begin, the final cast was removed. As the family gathered the next night for school blessings, is there any wonder as to who wanted the first blessing? A nine-year-old boy, a little older and a lot wiser, was first in line.

**NARRATOR: This has been Stories from General Conference on the topic of Priesthood Power. Thank you for listening to the Mormon Channel.**