



Time Stood Still

BY JOYCE HANSON WALLIN

After our daughter died, I wondered if I could move forward and find happiness again.

When our daughter Cindy was seven years old, she had to have tubes put in her ears. On the day of the surgery my husband, Dave, and I went to the hospital and left our seven-week-old daughter, Linda, and our two boys with a friend. I hesitated to leave Linda because she had a cold but felt I needed to be with Cindy.

We returned home to total chaos, but all I wanted was to get the children fed and in bed. I would deal with the mayhem in the morning. Cindy asked if she could hold Linda. I explained that Linda wasn't feeling well and told her she could hold her in the morning.

I awoke abruptly at 7:00 a.m., realizing I had not heard

Linda all night. I got up to check on her. As I picked her up, I realized her face was discolored and she was cold. "Dave," I cried, "I think Linda is dead!" Time stood still. It seemed like forever before anyone came into the room. Dave called the paramedics, but I almost wished they wouldn't come because I knew in my heart that Linda was beyond being revived and when they took her from me, I would not be able to hold her again in this lifetime.

The fire engine came first, then a police car, then an ambulance, and then the coroner. Linda was dead. They wrapped her in a blanket and took her away.

I couldn't believe what was happening. In the midst

of the tears, our four-year-old son, Brian, reassured me, “It will be OK, Mama.” He was so sincere, and it touched me that he wanted to comfort me.

The bishop came to our home immediately, offering to do anything he could to help. He spent the day with us, and I appreciated his quiet strength. Ward members stopped by as the news spread. One sister offered to watch the children. The Relief Society presidency came and cleaned our home. And a brother mowed our lawn.

The coroner’s report indicated the cause of death to be sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)—an unexplained death of a normally healthy infant less than one year old. It was then I realized I wasn’t completely in control of my family’s well-being—an unsettling thought. I felt guilty.

As time passed, I felt as if a bubble were surrounding me, and I knew the Holy Ghost was protecting me from hurt I could not handle. I prayed more sincerely than

ever, staying on my knees for long periods of time.

I took care of my family’s necessities but was unable to concentrate on anything for a long time. One day I was spending a few minutes at the piano when our two-year-old son, Joel, came to me carrying an open Church book. My immediate reaction was to scold him for getting into the books. But I took it from him and looked at the page. It was Joseph Fielding Smith’s *Doctrines of Salvation*, opened to the section on exaltation: “Children who die in childhood will not be deprived of any blessing. When they grow, after the resurrection, to the full maturity of the spirit, *they will be entitled to all the blessings which they would have been entitled to had they been privileged to tarry here and receive them.* The Lord has arranged for that, so that justice will be given to every soul.”¹

I had read this once before, but suddenly I realized I was receiving a special message from the Lord sent by my little son, who could not have known what he was bringing me. I felt the reality that all was well with my baby. I felt peace and assurance and realized it was time to increase my focus on the precious children who were still with me. Linda was assured her eternal glory; the rest of us still had a long way to go.

I take peace and reassurance from Luke 22:42–43: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.”

If Jesus Christ received strength from an angel in His time of need, then certainly I could accept the strength given me in my sorrow to be able to move on with my life.

We were blessed with another daughter, Karen, the year after Linda’s death. Although the trials we experience are not easy, I know there is a strengthening power in the Holy Ghost. I know that with the blessings of the Atonement and the support of friends and family I can experience both

good and bad times with a joyful heart, knowing of the wonderful blessings that are to come. ■

NOTE

1. Comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:54–55.



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