



SEEKING
Rescue

By Connie Goulding

On August 5, 2010, 33 Chilean miners were trapped by a massive cave-in after the rock inside the mine collapsed. They were restricted to a small safe area and to the mine shafts below the collapse, 2,300 feet (700 m) deep inside the earth.

The situation looked bleak. They were separated from home and family by almost a half a mile of unmovable rock overhead, and they had only a small supply of food and water. Although they had tools and knowledge, because of the instability of the mine they could not save themselves. Their only chance was to be found and rescued.

In spite of this, they chose to have hope. They organized themselves, rationed their food and water, and waited. They had faith that those on the surface were doing what they could to rescue them. Even so, it must have been hard to hold onto that hope as they waited in the dark. Days passed, and then weeks. Their carefully rationed food ran out.

I suffered a tremendous collapse in my own life. Before my eyes, my beautiful, funny, full-of-life eight-year-old son was killed in an automobile-pedestrian accident. I held his body as his blood spilled out on the roadway and his spirit slipped away and returned to his heavenly home. I pleaded with my Heavenly Father to let him stay, but that wasn't in my son's life plan.

I was lost in the dark, overwhelmed with the burden of my grief. I was weary, unable to rest, as the problem of mortality clouded my eyes. I came to know that a broken heart is a true physical feeling. Where once I had a heart, there was now only a dark hole that was raw and painful.

I believed that I should just be strong enough to get over it. Many people had suffered more. But like the miners,

Like the 33 men trapped by a mine collapse in Chile, we may feel trapped by our trials and weaknesses; however, through the plan of salvation we can find hope of a rescue.

trapped by the unmovable rock that held them captive, I could not lift the burden of my grief.

In many ways we can all feel trapped. Some may feel trapped by personal trials, weaknesses, or difficult circumstances in life. Nevertheless, there is comfort in knowing that mortal life is a time when we grow stronger as we face our sorrow and grief. We find hope in Jesus Christ.

A Ray of Hope

On the 17th day of their trial, hope was renewed for the miners when a small shaft was created by a drill bit that broke through the rock that held them captive.

The trapped men, wanting the rescuers on the surface to know they had been found alive, pounded on the drill bit and fastened a note written in red marker to the end of it. It read, "*Estamos bien en el refugio, los 33*" ("We are well in the shelter, the 33"). Hope was restored. They had been found.

Through a small hole, the circumference of a grapefruit, communication was established with the world on the surface. Food, water, medicine, and notes from loved ones were sent down the shaft to the miners.

It must have been with mixed feelings that the miners realized their situation. Although they had overwhelming joy and relief that they had been found, their situation was

still precarious. Even though those on the surface knew where they were, it would take time to put a rescue plan into place, and they could only hope it would even work.

The rescuers reluctantly informed the miners that it would be months before they could be brought to the surface. They hoped to have the miners back with their families by Christmas, which meant the miners faced an entombment of an additional four months. However, now they waited with hope.

We too have a ray of hope. Before this world was created, a plan was put into place to rescue us. Heavenly Father provided us a Savior, who would save us from our mortality, from our sins, from our weaknesses, and from all that we would suffer in this life. He is the giver of hope and of life. He paved the way for us to return to our Heavenly Father and to be reunited with the loved ones who have gone on before us. He stands beside us to take the weight of the burdens that we carry, to dry our tears, and to bring us peace. He came to bring us home, if we follow the plan He has set.

The Rescue

Although different attempts were made to rescue the miners, only one drill followed a straight path, through one of the small pilot holes that had been drilled previously to locate the miners.

The miners were not passive in their rescue. As the drill pounded its way to their rescue, rock fell down the smaller shaft and heaped up in the cavern where the miners were trapped. They moved the rock as it came down, clearing the way for the larger drill.

The rescuers built a capsule to be lowered down the narrow shaft using cables. The rescue capsule was barely



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big enough for a man to fit inside. The capsule was only four inches (10 cm) narrower than the shaft that was driven through 2,300 feet (700 m) of solid rock.

When the time came for the miners to be rescued, each man was faced with a choice. One man at a time stepped into the capsule; each would ascend alone. As each man chose to trust in the plan, he had to hope that

the capsule would be drawn up the narrow shaft in a true and straight ascent and not become off balance and get stuck. The plan had to work, or all hope was lost. Each miner stepped into the capsule and gave his will over to the plan and the rescuers.

One by one the miners made the solitary journey up from the darkness and into the light. They were greeted by their loved ones as the whole world watched and cheered.

The rescue plan succeeded; not one man was lost. They were redeemed on October 13, 2010—69 days after the mine collapse and 52 days after they had been found alive.

Trust the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Just as with the miners, our rescue is an individual rescue. Though salvation is available to everyone, our relationship with the Savior is an intimate and personal one. We must each choose to surrender our will to trust in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Because of the eternal sanctity of man's agency upon which this mortal life was founded, the Savior cannot take from us our will. We are free to choose. The Savior stands beside us waiting to heal our wounds and to lift us into eternal salvation, but He can only do that with our invitation. We must choose Him. For us, there is only one plan of rescue; it is in and through His atoning sacrifice. He descended below all things to rescue us.

My rescue came when I was on my knees in the depths of grief over my son's death. Like the miners as they entered the capsule, I was at a pivotal point: should I try to overcome my challenges with my own strength and knowledge, or should I reach out to my Heavenly Father and ask for help?

Oppressed by the weight of my grief, I decided to turn to God. As I appealed to my Father in Heaven, I told Him how weary I was and asked Him to please lift the burden of my grief. Before I stood again, the weight of my sorrows was lifted from my shoulders. I still had to work through the pain and loss, but the unbearable load was gone.

It was there that I came to know that the Savior stands by our side, waiting to lift us, waiting only for us to ask Him, waiting for us to lay our burdens upon His shoulders, waiting for us to put our hand in His so that He can rescue us.

We—like the miners, who had to pull the capsule door closed behind them and trust their rescuers—must surrender our will to the Savior and trust in His rescue plan for us.

It is my hope that when I make that solitary journey from this life into the next, there will be joy as I am reunited with those who have made the journey before me! In the meantime I know that my Savior lives and loves me and stands beside me. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



THE SAVIOR'S ATONEMENT CAN LIFT YOU

"We acknowledge that your path will at times be difficult. But I give you this promise in the name of the Lord: rise up and follow in the footsteps of our Redeemer and Savior, and one day you will look back and be filled with eternal gratitude that you chose to trust the Atonement and its power to lift you up and give you strength."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "You Can Do It Now!" *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 57.