

CHANGING *Hands and*

After a four-wheeling accident crushed her left hand, Claire was told she may never play the violin again. But she didn't believe it.

By Nichole Eck

For violinist Claire Z. of Idaho, USA, music has always been important. “It just makes everything better,” she says. “It gives you something to focus on and enjoy and share with others.” Music also gives Claire a way to share her beliefs. “I’m not very outgoing. Music is a way to bear my testimony.”

Growing up, Claire loved playing the violin and thought about studying it in college. But a four-wheeling accident almost changed her path forever.

The Accident

When Claire was 13, she and her friend were riding a four-wheeler together near Claire’s house. At a curve in the road, Claire lost control of the vehicle and it flipped. Claire’s friend was unharmed, but Claire’s left hand—the hand she most needed to play the violin—was crushed underneath a metal bar. Claire and her friend crawled out from under the vehicle and walked home, singing hymns and Primary songs to keep up their spirits.



CHANGING *Plans*



It took several surgeries and a year of physical therapy before Claire could even think about playing the violin again. At first it seemed impossible because the fingers of her left hand were weak and most of her ring finger had been amputated. Between surgeries, Claire found comfort playing the piano with her right hand.

The Lord's Help

Claire struggled with feeling angry and sad at the beginning of her trial. She remembers one night when she was having a hard time. "I felt like I was suffocating," Claire says, "like something really heavy was lying on my chest, and I couldn't breathe. Finally, I just knelt down and prayed, 'Heavenly Father, please help me to get through this and be OK.' And immediately that weight, that pressure just lifted, and I felt like I could do it. That was a really amazing experience. You can get through hard things with Heavenly Father."

SCRIPTURES OF COMFORT

When you go through hard times, remember that the scriptures are filled with messages from the Savior to help lift you up. Here are some examples. What others can you find?

- "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18).
- "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).
- "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my firstborn in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad" (2 Nephi 2:11).
- "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes. Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands" (D&C 121:7-9).
- "And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).





A Backward Violin

Before the accident, Claire had been the youngest member of her city's symphony. After the accident, she was worried she would never play the violin again.

Claire's violin teacher started to research how to build a backward violin that could be held with the right hand instead of the left. Everything on and inside the violin had to be moved around. Other music teachers and professional musicians said it was impossible, but Claire, her mother, and her violin teacher knew it could be done and eventually found someone who would make the violin.

Once the new violin was ready, it was very frustrating for Claire to learn to play with her right hand. She'd spent years training her left hand and fingers to move quickly across violin strings. Now she had to start over and teach her right hand to do it all. She felt discouraged by her memories of playing, because she was now unable to play as well as she had before. But with time, practice, and prayer, she did improve.

After six months of daily practice, Claire eventually earned a spot back in the symphony with her friends. She also put on a piano and violin recital with her friends at

the hospital where she'd been treated. Those who know her think of her as an inspiration and have learned from her example of hard work, determination, and faith in the Lord.

The Positive Side

Claire has learned a lot from her trial, but she thinks the most important lesson is to stay positive. "Don't let your anger control you," she says. "You have to get negative feelings out because they're all in there, but make sure you're focusing on the good in your situation and finding the positive after you have those moments. You have to make yourself think positively and find the good things, however few or little you think they may be."

Claire says that good support also helped her stay positive. "I have great family, friends, and neighbors who were just happy, visited me, and brought me lots of treats."

Claire's life is very different from the life she may have imagined a few years ago, but she says, "I don't think I'd ever want it to change. I've met so many amazing people." With the Lord's help, hard work, determination, and a positive attitude, Claire can once again follow her dream and continue playing the violin. **NE**

Nichole Eck lives in Utah, USA.



BE OF GOOD CHEER

"There will always be things to

complain about—things that don't seem to go quite right. You can spend your days feeling sad, alone, misunderstood, or unwanted. But that isn't the journey you had hoped for, and it's not the journey Heavenly Father sent you to take. Remember, you are truly a [child] of God!

"With this in mind, I invite you to walk confidently and joyfully. Yes, the road has bumps and detours and even some hazards. But don't focus on them. Look for the happiness your Father in Heaven has prepared for you in every step of your journey. Happiness is the destination, but it's also the path."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Your Wonderful Journey Home," Ensign, May 2013, 129.