

# When I Lost My Father

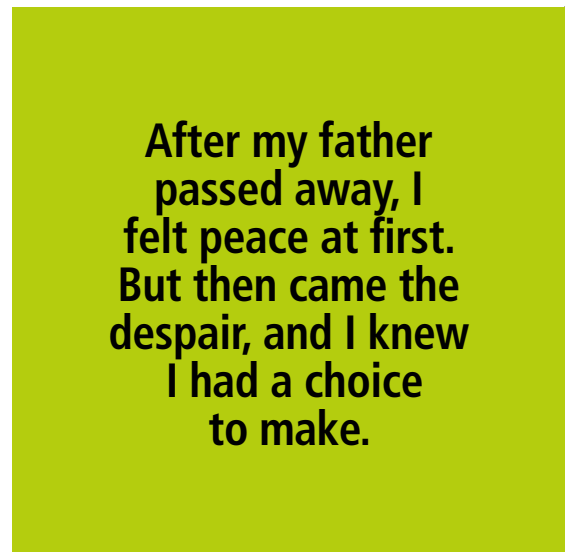
By Amy Cook

**T**he Oregon, USA, coast was a beautiful setting for a camping trip that I took with some of the members of my immediate family. I was there with my mother, two older sisters and their families, my younger brother, and my husband. I was 23 years old at the time and enjoying life as a newlywed. We were taking this camping trip as a precursor to a family reunion that was going to take place in Oregon with my mother's family in a couple of days. My father had to work the few days before the reunion, but he was going to join us soon on our camping trip. The day he was planning to join us was a day that changed my life drastically. We received a call from my grandmother, informing us that she was at the hospital with my father. He had suffered a heart attack. My grandmother gently told us, "He is already gone."

The days that followed my dad's passing were some I will never forget.

We came together as a family. We had tremendous support from our extended families, ward members, and people who knew my father in the community. It was a spiritual time for us. There were times when we cried on each other's shoulders and when we felt moments of peace. My father was a good man who held many callings in the Church and was an exemplary priesthood holder and a devoted husband and father. The day of his funeral was one of peace. We celebrated his life and were reminded once again of our Savior's love and the wonderful plan of salvation that Heavenly Father has prepared for us. We went away from the funeral missing our father but with hope in our hearts that we would be reunited with him.

It was a couple of weeks after the funeral when my suffering began. I had returned home to Utah, USA, away from my mother and other



family members, and unfortunately I started to forget the peaceful feelings I had at the funeral. I felt alone and my heart ached for my father; we had been very close and had spoken together often. I also worried about being so far from my mother because it was not an easy time for her either. I became despondent, angry about losing my father so suddenly. And I began asking, "Why?"

On one particularly bad night when I was home alone and sobbing, I felt I was slipping further and further into despair. I was prompted to pray and pour my heart out to my Heavenly Father. I told Him everything that was in my aching heart and asked

for help to not be angry. As I finished my prayer, a realization came to me that I had to make a choice: either let myself fall deeper into despair and be angry or allow my Savior to encircle His arms of love around me and carry my burdens (see D&C 6:20).

I looked up and glanced at a painting of the Savior I had hung up on the wall two years earlier. It depicts the Savior reaching His hand down and helping a little girl climb up onto some rocks to where He is standing. I knew that I needed the Savior, and because of those moments in Gethsemane, He was the only person who knew exactly what I was going through (see Matthew 26:36–39; Luke 22:39–44; Alma 7:11–13). He was reaching out for me. I took that as an answer to my prayer and began studying the gospel more devotedly so I could feel peace again.

My testimony of the Savior was strengthened because of this experience. I have become forever grateful for the Savior's Atonement and Resurrection and for the gift of eternal life available to us through Him. I thank Heavenly Father in my prayers daily for sending His Only Begotten Son to earth for us. I think of my own father every day and miss him, but I always have hope in my heart that we will be reunited in the next life because of the Savior's love and ultimate sacrifice. I am in awe of Jesus Christ, and I strive every day to follow His example so that when my judgment day comes I will be deemed worthy to live with Him and with my family forever. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

