

FINDING SOLACE

IN

Sacred Hymns

Hymns have the power to bring peace in times of sorrow and grief.



COPING WITH THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE IS NOT EASY, BUT THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST WE CAN BE COMFORTED. HERE, THREE LATTER-DAY SAINTS SHARE HOW THE HYMNS GAVE THEM SOLACE AS THEY FACED THE DEATH OF FAMILY MEMBERS.

Sharing Our Loss

Several years after our first son was born, my husband and I were trying—unsuccessfully—to have more children. After months, we were elated to discover that we were finally expecting, but soon our hopes were dashed when I miscarried.

Some time later, I found out that I was pregnant again. Apprehension clouded my hopes, but as the months passed without incident, my husband and I became increasingly optimistic. During this time, I was called into the ward's Relief Society presidency. The Relief Society president, Kay, had a son who had been diagnosed with an inoperable tumor growing at the base of his brain. The prognosis was bleak, and doctors said that his life was drawing to an end.

While the following weeks brought sorrow to Kay and her family, the little life inside of me continued to grow. Excitement filled me at each doctor's appointment when I heard my baby's heartbeat. But then one morning that heartbeat wasn't there. The umbilical cord had become securely wrapped around our baby's neck, and he had died. My husband and I felt hollow with despair. I wondered why the Lord would have us undergo such a trial.

Kay listened and tried to comfort me, and then she suggested that we go to the temple as a Relief Society presidency. I hesitantly agreed.

Later, while I sat in the chapel of the Seattle Washington Temple, my heart began to open to a soft melody the organist played over and over again. I couldn't determine what hymn it was but tried to distinguish a few phrases. The hymn's melody repeated itself in my mind throughout the temple session. When I arrived home, I quickly went to my hymn-book. I located the hymn, and the words penetrated my soul. It was as if Heavenly Father knew my innermost thoughts and feelings:

*Where can I turn for peace?
Where is my solace
When other sources cease to make me whole?
When with a wounded heart, anger, or malice,
I draw myself apart,
Searching my soul?*

*Where, when my aching grows,
Where, when I languish,
Where, in my need to know, where can I run?
Where is the quiet hand to calm my anguish?
Who, who can understand?
He, only One.*

*He answers privately,
Reaches my reaching
In my Gethsemane, Savior and Friend.
Gentle the peace he finds for my beseeching.
Constant he is and kind,
Love without end.*

(“Where Can I Turn for Peace?” *Hymns*, no. 129.)

The Spirit's comforting peace poured over me, and I knew that Heavenly Father loved me and understood my sorrow. He had not forsaken me, but in His wisdom had supported me throughout this challenge. Now, many years later, I still view that moment as a time when my testimony was strengthened because of those simple words.

Lonna Heuett, Utah, USA



Singing to Grandmother

While I was away at college, my mother called late one Friday night and said, “It’s time to come home. Your grandmother is weak, and I doubt she will be with us much longer.” My grandmother had been living with our family for the past year because she was too sick to live on her own. I knew her time on earth was drawing to an end, but I was not ready for my mother’s words.

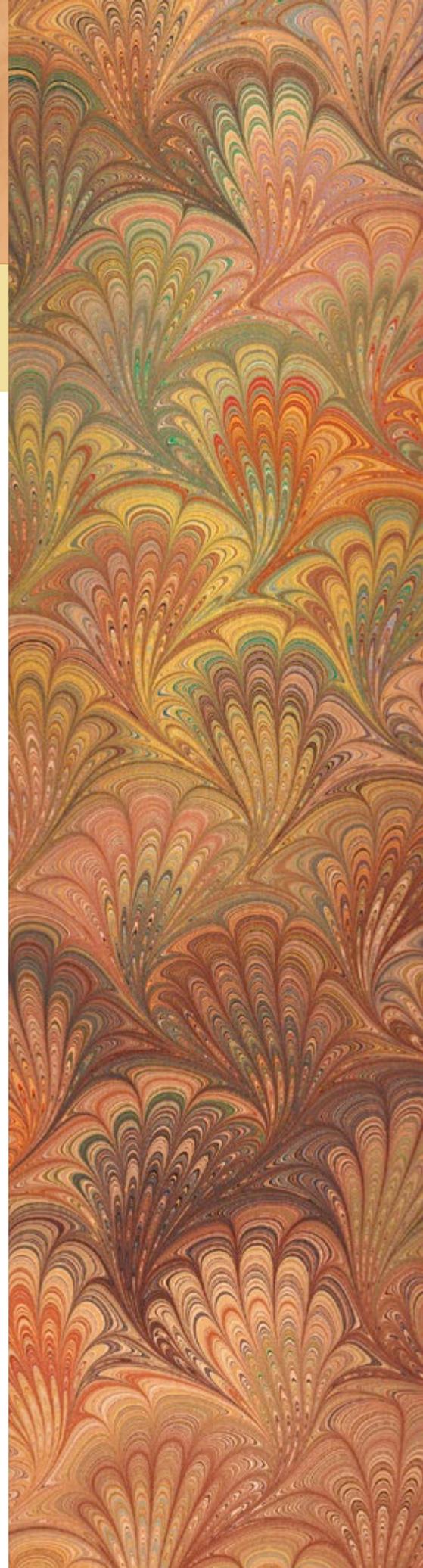
I sped toward home from college and recalled my childhood visits to my grandmother’s home—the stories she had told, the family treasures she had shown me, and the Spirit I had felt when I was with her. As I pulled up to our family’s house, the flood of memories ceased and my mind returned to reality.

I entered my grandmother’s bedroom and noticed that she no longer had hope in her eyes. Her face was gaunt, fearful, full of pain. She didn’t acknowledge my presence; even when I held her hand she continued

looking sadly at the ceiling. As I wondered how to express my love for her, a prompting came to my mind: “Sing.” I thought, “Sing? What can I sing at a time like this? I can’t sing.” But the thought came again: “Sing a hymn.”

I hesitated, feeling inadequate to sing, but began to hum “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 30). Grandma turned and acknowledged my presence. I looked at her and began singing. She squeezed my hand, and tears welled up in her eyes while I sang every hymn and Primary song I could remember. Although I was not used to singing in front of anyone, I soon was singing so loudly that my family came to see what was happening. Immediately noticing the changed look in my grandmother’s eyes, they gathered hymnbooks and joined me. My sister played the piano in the next room. We could see that my grandmother felt comforted.

My testimony of the influence of the hymns was strengthened that day as I saw my grandmother’s countenance transform. I now know that music can change lives, soften hearts, and give hope to those in need.
Bethany Thiemann Roper, Idaho, USA





DARKNESS OF DEATH DISPELLED

“The darkness of death can ever be dispelled by the light of revealed truth. ‘I am the resurrection, and the life,’ spoke the Master. ‘He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die’ [John 11:25–26].”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Finding Peace,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 7.

Bound in Heaven

My first child was born prematurely and lived for only a few minutes. My husband and I planned a small graveside service for our son. While we searched for a hymn that would be appropriate at his funeral, we discovered that “Be Still, My Soul” (*Hymns*, no. 124) offered the comfort and hope we sought.

*Be still, my soul: The hour is hast'ning on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief,
and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest
joys restored.
Be still, my soul: When
change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall
meet at last.*

The words of this hymn gave me comfort in the present, joy regarding the past, and hope for the future. It strengthened our testimonies of our temple sealing and helped us realize that if we are faithful, the sorrow we feel will someday be only a memory. We know we can live again as an eternal family.

Lindsey Pingel, Oregon, USA





DEATH IS THE PASSAGE HOME

“Eternal perspective provides peace ‘which passeth all understanding.’

(Philip. 4:7.) In speaking at a funeral of a loved one, the Prophet Joseph Smith offered this admonition:

‘When we lose a near and dear friend, upon whom we have set our hearts, it should be a caution unto us. . . . Our affections should be placed upon God and His work, more intensely than upon our fellow beings.’ (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 216.)

“Life does not begin with birth, nor does it end with death. Prior to our birth, we dwelled as spirit children with our Father in Heaven. There we eagerly anticipated the possibility of coming to earth and obtaining a physical body. Knowingly we wanted the risks of mortality, which would allow the exercise of agency and accountability. ‘This life [was to become] a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God.’ (Alma 12:24.) But we regarded the returning home as the best part of that long-awaited trip, just as we do now. Before embarking on any journey, we like to have some assurance of a round-trip ticket. Returning from earth to life in our heavenly home requires passage through—and not around—the doors of death. We were born to die, and we die to live. (See 2 Cor. 6:9.) As seedlings of God, we barely blossom on earth; we fully flower in heaven.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Doors of Death,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 72.

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