

That We Might Have JOY

By Andrea Jones

It did not take long for me to realize that my mission was going to be very different than I had expected. I was faced with some unexpected challenges. I tried to stay positive, but my attempts often failed, leaving me feeling discouraged. Thankfully, I received encouragement at zone conferences, which always concluded with a testimony meeting.

I remember one particular zone conference when each missionary took the stand, expressing the joy of serving a mission. As the meeting progressed, I began to feel uncomfortable. I had been a missionary for a full year but had never felt the joy others were describing. I left that conference heavy-hearted and confused, questioning why I was even serving a mission. What was wrong with me? Why couldn't I feel that same joy? Later that night I expressed my concerns to Heavenly Father and asked Him how I could feel such joy.

Several weeks later, while attending stake conference, I received my answer during a talk by my mission president. Although he spoke to the hundreds in the audience, I felt that he spoke directly to me. He talked about the joy of Christ's Redemption that each of us

Everything that made my mission difficult seemed to keep me from feeling joy. But did it have to?

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can feel every day. He testified that even during difficult and uncertain times, we can feel joy from understanding the significance of the Savior's Atonement.

I knew those words were for me. Heavenly Father had answered my prayer. Perhaps my mission was not going as I had thought it would, but the Savior loved me and had atoned for my sins. The joy I thought I had never experienced was all around me. I just hadn't opened my heart to feel it.

My challenges continued, but this experience taught me that I could feel joy by choosing to open my heart to the Savior's redeeming power and by sharing my testimony of that power with others.

Since my mission I have come to understand that situations and surroundings have no lasting impact on our ability to feel joy. Instead, true joy comes from obeying and believing in Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, who made life here—and hereafter—"that [we] might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). ■

