

BY LAUREN HOLMAN

In January of 2007 I was home during Christmas break, and I was lonely. Then on the first Tuesday of the year, one of my friends from school who is not a Latter-day Saint called me and invited me to go to a botanical garden near our home in Arcadia, California. We were there for most of the day amongst beautiful flowers and trees with ponds, geese, and peacocks. After a while we got tired and decided to sit underneath a huge weeping willow to rest.

It was a sunny day, but you could hardly see daylight underneath the tree except for one small pillar of light that shone on the two of us. That place was so peaceful, and it reminded me of something.

“Do you know what this reminds me of?” I said. “This reminds me of Joseph Smith, when he went to the grove to pray about which religion was true.” She knew I was a member of the Church, so she sort of laughed. “No, I’m dead serious,” I continued. “There’s this sort of beauty to this place that fills me with a spirit of peace.”

We sat there in silence for about a minute or so. The whole time she had this look like she was debating whether or not to say something. Finally she asked, “How do you know? I mean, how do you know what you believe is true?”

This kind of caught me off guard, because she had asked me before what I believed but not how I knew it was true. I explained that I knew because I had prayed to know for myself. I had wanted to know if what I had studied and believed was true. So I had gone before the Lord with an open heart and mind and asked. Then I had been overcome by this feeling of happiness, as if no evil in the world could ever touch me. And all of those things that stress me out in life didn’t matter because the Lord was with me.

Before I knew it, she was in tears. She then said, “You don’t know how badly I want to believe in something, but everything I’ve ever believed in just disappointed me. How can I believe in something that isn’t tangible?”

At first I honestly didn’t know how to answer her. We let the question hang there for a moment as I thought of what to say.

“Faith,” I then said, “is so hard to develop and so easy to lose. Faith can only strengthen us, but we must have an open heart and mind to acquire it. It may be far-fetched, but I have never gone wrong with faith, and I know that’s how it’ll always be.”

With that, we just sat in silence, enjoying the peaceful feeling of the Spirit. **NE**

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