

I can picture my faithful dad sitting at the end of our kitchen table on Saturday mornings with a notepad and pen, a pile of books, and the scriptures, carefully preparing talks for church. He had a strong testimony of our Savior and even though he was reserved, he was glad to be able to share Christ and His gospel with others. Today, I have the honor to talk about one of the important topics that my dad taught about, the plan of Salvation.

Before I talk about Heavenly Father's plan of happiness though, I want to talk about the healing power of grief.

My dad was very patient and faithful through his battle with lymphoma in his brain. He honestly didn't complain and when people asked him how he was doing, he always thought of a neutral, if not positive, way to respond. Nevertheless, we knew that it was not easy and that he suffered. Our hearts broke for all the challenges that he had to endure. As it became evident that he wouldn't be healed again in the way that we were hoping, we experienced anticipatory grief. By that, I mean that we reflected on his importance in our lives, how much we loved him, and how we would miss him when he died. When he passed away, some family members felt relief that his suffering was over. Others expressed peace in knowing that they would see him again. Many of us also felt tremendous sadness. We can feel sadness and peace at the same time or alternately and that is ok. Emotions are God-given and it is important to feel and process our emotions.

I recently read that "grief is the price we pay for loving someone—and that the price is worth it." I know that for me, having such an amazing and loving father has been a priceless gift in my life and I gladly bear this grief.

This week, I have found comfort in the short verse about when Lazarus died. "Jesus wept." Even knowing that He would raise Lazarus from the dead, Jesus loved and cared for Mary and Martha as they grieved and He mourned with them.

There is no timeline for grief. It often comes and goes and presents in a variety of ways. Grief is a very natural and appropriate response to losing someone who we care so much about.

Because Jesus Christ descended below all things, He has divine empathy and knows how to support us in our trials. Jesus not only senses our emotions, but he feels them with us. As we grieve, the Lord will send the Holy Ghost to help comfort us. He will also continue to send friends and loved ones to bear us up, support us, and remind us of the peace the gospel brings.

I want to talk about that peace now. Heavenly Father wants all of his children to have the opportunity to have joy, immortality, and eternal life. The plan of salvation gives purpose to our mortal life and is the reason that we can smile through tears of grief today.

Spirit World: We believe that we are all spirit children of Heavenly Parents. We believe that we lived with them as spirits before we came to earth and that we can grow and become like them and return to them again.

Creation: We believe that under Heavenly Father's direction, Jesus Christ created our beautiful Earth.

My dad was very thankful for our wonderful world and loved being in nature. He loved hiking, sailing, fishing, traveling, mowing the grass, and spending time in nature. I am thankful that he has shared these joys with us.

Fall: The creation of earth included the creation of Adam and Eve. When they partook of the fruit, Adam and Eve's bodies became mortal and susceptible to illness, pain, sadness, and death. This was part of the grand design. Because they partook of the fruit, they learned the difference between joy and sadness and they were able to procreate. Because of the fall, we were all able to receive physical bodies. Having a body is one of the purposes and joys of Earth Life.

As Craig mentioned, my dad was acquainted with grief at a young age. I think that the loss of his father affected him deeply. Specifically, he became aware of others' mortal suffering and did not want to cause others additional pain.

Earth Life: My dad also knew the joys of having a body. He was thankful for his body and respected it by following the Word of Wisdom and exercising daily. Even when his body began to fail him, he did everything in his power to preserve his life. He loved his family and he found joy in all of his roles. He was a great brother, son, husband, dad, and grandpa.

We believe that earth life is a time for learning and growth.

My dad loved learning. He was an excellent student and an avid reader. He believed in eternal progression and strived to improve each day. He wrote and accomplished many goals every year. He was deliberate in prioritizing the things that mattered to him and becoming the person that he wanted to be.

My dad valued the gift of agency. He was a man of integrity. He did his best to make choices that were in harmony with his beliefs and with his understanding of right and wrong. He respected our freedoms and our choices too and told us that he loved us and was proud of us.

Heavenly Father planned a way for us to overcome our spiritual and temporal deaths, which were necessary results of the Fall. Jesus agreed to be our intercessor or advocate to the Father. He came to Earth as both a God and a Man. He led the only perfect life. He loved everyone and obeyed all of God's commandments. He chose to take on all of our sins and willingly felt every pain and heartache known to man. He knows us and loves us and wants to give us His mercy.

After Jesus atoned for our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was crucified. Jesus inherited the ability to die from his earthly mother, Mary, and the ability to overcome death from his Heavenly Father. He willingly died on the cross so that he could later be resurrected. Three days after he was laid to rest, He achieved the greatest victory of all time, the victory over death. Because He was resurrected, we can be too.

It is very difficult to lose someone so special, but we find comfort that his spirit is now in the spirit world and that he can see family members who had died previously. We believe that *at the time of the resurrection, his spirit and body and all of our spirits and bodies, will reunite, and will live forever. We believe that we will then be judged and received into a beautiful kingdom of glory. We believe that families can be together forever with God.*

My dad died on Easter, the day that we celebrate Christ's Resurrection and Atonement. I hope that our family will always remember his faith and testimony. I hope that we can feel hope and peace that we will be reunited again.

Because Christ lives, we will see Dad, Grandpa, Ben again.

I say these things, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.