

At different times in my life the Plan of Salvation has meant different things to me. Most recently it has taken on new meaning in the form of fatherhood. Watching those first few moments of a baby's life is truly humbling. To know that these little spirits have come directly from out Heavenly Father is a miracle. Several times as I have observed my children at this infant stage I've had the thought that maybe their spirits and minds are not completely veiled at birth, but that the veil is a gradual process that progresses as they get older. When they are born they retain a little bit of heaven when they come to us. Their spirits are so tender and their countenance is so sweet. And then they hit the age of two – I am positive that the veil is in full effect by the time they are two years old. The other day I was sitting on the couch when my son Lincoln came up to me, gave me a hug, and told me that he loved me. He then followed this up with "I'm sorry I called you 'stupid' yesterday." I had no idea that he had called me stupid, but when it comes to getting an apology from a 4 year old, you take what you can get.

When I was on my mission I began to view the Plan in a more selfless way. It wasn't just about where I fit into the great scheme of things, it was a Plan for everyone, and most of the people on earth had still not heard about it. I was going on a mission to do my little part and spread the Word as best I could. I

wanted others to hear about the good news. I served my mission in Suriname. Most of you hear have never heard of this place and know nothing about the people who live there. When I got my mission call I grabbed a world map to see where it was. It's a small country in South America. And that's when it hit me – this was a plan for everyone, even those people who lived in remote corners of the earth. God is aware of all of us.

But my awareness of the Plan began at a very young age. I can still remember the first time I heard the story of the Plan of Salvation. I was 4 years old and it was a few weeks before Easter. My Sunday school teacher taught us on a little flannel board the basic outline. Many of the aspects of the Plan didn't make much sense to me at the time. It was hard for me to conceptualize the pre-existence, I had no idea what the judgment was, and the three degrees of glory were just a sun, a moon, and a star. But there was one part of the plan that stuck with me: The Resurrection. This was something that even at my young age I could sink my teeth into. This made perfect sense to me. It was the most exciting thing I had ever heard – and it probably still is. I began telling everyone about the Resurrection. You see, my dad had passed away just a few months earlier. I didn't know what cancer was, I didn't know what death meant – all I knew was that my dad was

gone and he wasn't coming home. But the Resurrection was great news! I learned that everyone who lives on the earth would live again and live forever. Jesus had been resurrected – and all those who died would also be resurrected – and we celebrated this on Easter Sunday – next week! I couldn't wait.

That evening at dinner I must have been grinning ear to ear. My mother asked me what I was so happy about – she had been warned by my Aunt Peggy that I may have been a little too excited about Easter. In answer to her question, I told her that I couldn't wait for Easter. I'm sure she thought I was excited about the Easter bunny, the Easter egg hunt, and all the candy. Unbeknownst to my mom, I wasn't concerned with any of that stuff. So my mom asked what was going to happen on Easter. I told her what I had learned in Sunday school that week. I taught her about the Resurrection, and she asked me what it meant to me. I told her that it meant that dad was coming home next week on Easter Sunday. To this day I can still remember the heartbreak in her voice when she told me that dad probably wasn't going to make it home by next Sunday. I was deflated, all the excitement I had felt earlier that day was gone. But there was still hope. I asked my mother if dad could possibly make it home by next month. "Why?" she asked – well, the father and sons outing is

next month and I want to go. That evening my mother told me that the Resurrection was real. It may not happen next week, it may not happen next month, but it might. In any event it was real, and that one day I would see my dad again. I was disappointed that he wasn't coming home soon, but there was relief in my heart that we would be reunited as a family.

Mosiah 3:18 For behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just; and the infant perisheth not that dieth in his infancy; but men drink damnation to their own souls except they humble themselves and **become as little children**, and believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

As I often reflect back on this experience, one thing that always impacts me is the faith that I had at such a young age. There was no doubt in my mind that the Resurrection was going to happen – it was as simple as my dad coming home from work. The Resurrection was so real that I was preparing for it to happen next week. This experience has proven to be an anchor point for me during some difficult times in my life. We all go through periods when our testimonies could use some work, but no matter how strong or weak my testimony is, my goal has always been to get

back to how strong my faith was in the Plan of Salvation was when
I was 4.

God lives and he loves us.