



PASSPORT
— *to* —
HEAVEN

The True Story
of a Zealous
Mormon Missionary
Who Discovers
the Jesus
He Never Knew

Micah Wilder

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The conversations in this book were reconstructed from the author's memory and diligently kept journals at the time the events occurred.

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*A testimony of the gospel of the grace of God,
to the eternal glory of Christ Jesus the Savior.*

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FOREWORD

SEAN MCDOWELL

I *love* this book. It has all the elements that make a great story, including conflict, drama, and courage. But there are three aspects, in particular, that set *Passport to Heaven* apart. These are the reasons I believe you will love this book too.

First, it is *enjoyable* to read. Having not read anything by Micah Wilder before, I didn't know what to expect. But I was pleasantly surprised! Micah is a wonderful writer. While this book includes theological reflections, they are presented through the lens of Micah's life story. He recounts conversations and experiences with remarkable detail and shares them with intrigue. If you enjoy a good story, this book is for you.

Second, it is *inspiring* to read. While I was familiar with Micah's story, I had no idea about all the costly challenges he had faced along the way. From the first moment he began to question the faith of his childhood, Micah endured some considerable trials from which he could have taken the easy way out. He could have folded. He could have chosen the safe route. He could have gone with the script that other people had for his life. But he didn't. And along the way, he offers some lessons that inspired me to think about *my* willingness to follow truth even when it is costly to do so. I am confident these lessons will do the same for you.

Third, it is *charitable*. We live in polarized times. Sadly, there is often minimal kindness toward people who see the world differently. And yet this book is different. Micah engages some ideas that are deeply held by people. These ideas shape the direction of people's lives. And while Micah states his beliefs with conviction, he always exudes love and kindness toward others. He doesn't set up strawman arguments, nor does he cast others in an unnecessarily negative light. Rather, he engages both people and ideas with charity. This is refreshing.

A ton more could be said about why I love *Passport to Heaven*. As I was reading it, I frequently shared some of the stories and insights with my family. Having grown up in a religious home, I could personally relate to so many of Micah's stories. And yet, whether you grew up in a religious home or no, you will relate deeply to his story as well. You are going to thoroughly enjoy it.

Because I am a professor, blogger, and podcaster, I read somewhere between 100-150 books each year. But this is a book I am going to remember and recommend for a long time.

As I said at the beginning, I love this book. I am grateful for all the effort Micah invested in writing it, and I appreciate the humility with which he shares what he has to say.

I am confident you will too.

Sean McDowell
Author, speaker, associate professor

PART 1

THE
SEEDS

CHAPTER 1

REFUGE

Beverly Hills, Florida | January 20, 2006

Though muffled and almost inaudible, Lucas' soft-spoken voice crept its way to my ears from the other side of the door: "You have a call, Elder Wilder."

Bemused by his uncharacteristic boldness, I slid back the shower curtain just enough to stick my head out and away from the droning pitter-patter of the freezing cold water. I listened intently for a moment, hoping he would tell whoever was on the phone that I was temporarily indisposed. But I could see from the shadow fretfully shifting under the door that he was still there.

After a few seconds of painful shivering calm, I surrendered to the fate that I was about to be seriously inconvenienced.

"What...a call?" I exclaimed through the rumbling of the shower. "Okay, just a minute!"

Since I had known Lucas, my timid mission companion had never even been brave enough to answer the phone, let alone appeal through a closed door. What luck that he had waited until I was fully compromised to seize an interest in whatever foolishness was taking place in the world.

I couldn't be frustrated with him, though, because Lucas was—by any metric—no ordinary missionary. My slightly stout, blond-haired, teddy-bear of a roommate was the most childlike and innocent adult I had ever

come to know. In our short three weeks together, I had grown accustomed to his many eccentricities that pervaded our daily missionary life. His antics—slightly embarrassing to me at times—tested my patience and yet simultaneously grew my love for him.

Although Lucas loathed getting out of bed at daybreak (due to his affinity for staying up until ungodly hours of the night doing puzzles in his cartoon pajamas), mornings for me had always been anticipated with eagerness. I thrived on arising early and going through my morning rituals while relishing the only moments of true privacy that I was offered in life. It was during these times that, as I robotically prepared for the day, I could legitimately be lost in my own private thoughts.

In my youth, I would often enter the dense forest along the river near my boyhood home as the sun pierced the seemingly impenetrable darkness of night. Climbing my favorite tree, I would survey the land and reflect on the events of my uncomplicated life, talking to God as one would a friend. Although a far cry from the river hideaway that had become my personal sanctuary as a child, the stillness of the approaching dawn here in Beverly Hills, Florida, had afforded me much-needed time for daily intimacy with God and His Word.

Now that my life was infinitely more complex, I once again found myself perched on a precipice—no longer overlooking a forest canopy, but emotionally surveying the final days of my unprecedented mission. After twenty-three-and-a-half months, the dawn habits were second nature and had molded themselves seamlessly into the military-like routine that was quite appropriate to the ethos of our religious crusade. Feeling seasoned by now, most of my tasks were set on autopilot and had become a predictable routine.

This morning, however, I varied our tedious schedule by allowing Lucas to shower first—a concession I now sorely regretted. Because he had taken more than two hours, I not only found myself tremendously tardy, but I was also enduring the punishment for my generosity as glacial-cold water poured over my constricting back muscles. Lucas' lack of discipline had robbed me of every drop of hot water and set the entire day off kilter.

Regardless, I was looking forward to a new day of dragging my affable

yet slightly narcoleptic comrade to a couple of engagements (even if it did require the aid of a few motivational tricks and treats).

“Wilder, telephone,” he gently implored one more time while adding a light tap on the door.

Stepping out of the shower with my eyes stinging from soap, I reached for the phone and placed it on my shoulder. As I groped for a towel, I began speaking before the receiver was even tight to my ear.

“Good morning, this is Elder Wilder!” I said, calling upon every ounce of false enthusiasm I could muster, trying to hide the fact that I was standing there very naked and equally wet. The first words I heard sounded as if they were from a cheap radio.

“Well, good morning, Elder Wilder.”

I knew that voice. I knew it *all* too well. I was hit so hard that a shock wave cascaded down my spine. Sorensen! It was my mission president¹—my spiritual leader and the individual with the God-given authority to judge me righteously. Lucas had just coldcocked me!

“G...good morning, President,” I stammered. Why on earth was he calling me? Worse, I felt as though his all-seeing eye was able to perceive my nakedness, forcing me to flush with embarrassment so deep that it must have evaporated every drop of water from my body.

Before I could recover from feeling as though I had been caught in dereliction of duty, President spoke up.

“Elder Wilder, I was wondering if you could meet with me at the Leesburg Stake Center² today at twelve o’clock.”

As President’s unexpected request sunk in, I panicked.

“Okay, President,” I responded, my voice trembling, “I’ll meet you then.”

“I will see you at noon, Elder Wilder.”

I stood in dumbfounded silence for a few moments, feeling as though the room was spinning. In an effort to relieve the nausea developing inside of me, I turned on the faucet and splashed a handful of cold water over my face. Staring at myself in the slightly foggy mirror, I tried to calm my anxiety, but couldn’t help but wonder what would transpire. My eyes slowly filled with tears as I was temporarily left to the devices of my imagination and all sorts of cruel scenarios were free to play out in my mind. How had my life come to this?

“God, what’s going to happen?” I pleaded. “Please, Father, don’t leave me alone. Give strength to Your beloved and rescue me. What do I do?”

The Love Epidemic

As I viewed myself in the mirror with bewilderment, it was clear that I was not the same person who began this journey two years ago, and the evidence of my transformation had become more apparent than I wanted to admit. My faith was no longer rooted in this religion I still represented; rather, it was found in the fullness of God’s superlative love, which I had received through His Son Jesus Christ—a love that was profoundly unveiled to me when I least expected it.

Certainly, from President’s point of view, I had been infected with a frightening disease that consumed my life, thoughts, and actions. Over time, this plague had manifested itself into a dangerous threat by spreading to half of the other missionaries. In a desperate effort to combat the ever-growing epidemic, President implemented the only logical recourse he could—he quarantined me to the outer reaches of the mission boundaries less than three months ago.

Without ever being accused of any crime—or even told that I had done anything wrong—I had been demoted, dishonored, and finally exiled. Although it took time to bury the pain of my relegation, I eventually accepted my humbling fate. I was confident that the worst of my reprimands had played out already. What more could President do to me now?

Before the initial shock of my predicament had time to wear off, I paged my most trusted friend, Erik. From the time I had been caught in the devastating bowels of Hurricane Jeanne—the third of four fateful hurricanes that seemingly blew my life off its previous course—Erik had become the first person I went to when in need. Like David’s faithful companion in the Bible, Jonathan, Erik was knit to my very soul in the love of Christ. He had gently and lovingly guided me to God’s Word at key points during my time in Florida. He would know what to do. I was confident of that.

As I waited for my friend to return my call, I turned off the faucet. I grabbed a towel and wiped a small section of the clouded-up mirror and leaned over the sink, trying to calm my panic. I carefully approached the

pitiful creature staring back at me, a pathetic doppelganger who looked confused and insecure. The fear within me was growing, and I longed for an escape as I gazed at my reflection.

Soon my mind was transported to the tranquil landscape of my youth—the thick woodlands of rural Indiana. It was there in my sanctuary on the banks of the White River that my intimacy with God was born and cultivated, and within that fertile land, I found my place of solitude from the troubles of the world. Whenever I perceived myself to be in hopeless despair or facing some imminent peril, I would run to my river hideaway—all the while pleading with God, knowing that He would be my refuge from whatever storm was threatening me. Upon arrival, I would spend countless hours on the eroding embankment and stare at my reflection in the dark and turbulent water until I felt His peace.

Now fast approaching my twenty-first birthday and no longer a child, I knew I was facing possibly the greatest plight I had ever experienced, and more than ever I needed a refuge from the oncoming tempest. Thankfully, over the past year and a half, I had rediscovered my safe harbor—not on a riverbank in central Indiana, but rather, alongside a river of living water within the Word of God.

In the last moments of my time of reflection, I pondered the comforting words of Psalm 91:1-2:

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”

CHAPTER 2

THE CROSS

The ring of the phone snapped me out of my daydream. Hoping it was my friend, I quickly pulled on my pants as I hopped to the phone on one foot.

“Hello?” I blurted awkwardly. I had expended so many emergency reserves lately that my ability to breathe was compromised. I took in a loud gulp.

“Hey, Kid.” Erik had always called me Kid from the first day I met him.

“Well, I just got off the phone with President. He wants to meet with me today at noon.”

“Did he say why?” Erik asked.

“He didn’t say. But it must be something serious.”

Erik pointed out that in less than three weeks, my two years of service to the Church would be complete. Meeting with me now was no insignificant demand—the timing of the request was peculiar.

“Do you think somebody told him about everything that’s been going on?” I questioned, pacing around the room. I couldn’t seem to stay still. “What should I say, Erik? What do you think he wants?”

In an attempt to calm myself, I sat on my bed and ran my hands through my hair. Out of the corner of my eye I spotted the source of the miraculous transformation that had set my life on a new trajectory: The

Bible, God's very Word, and my most valuable earthly treasure. Peace swept over me and everything seemed to change in that moment. For the first time, I resigned myself to submit to my dilemma.

Adjacent to my Bible was a letter Erik had given to me sixteen months earlier during the height of a devastating hurricane. He had made me vow to not open it until my mission was completed. I had kept that promise and realized the day I could break its seal was fast approaching. I had been tempted many times to breach my oath, but much more so right now because perhaps therein lay the answer to my quandary. But I resisted.

The seconds ticked by as Erik and I found ourselves in an eerie silence. Then, in an apparently sudden epiphany, he spoke.

"I think this is the end," he said softly.

"The end of what?" I asked.

"The end of your mission, Micah. I was afraid this was going to happen. I didn't want you to have to go through this, but I believe there is no other way." He paused for a second. "If you are who I believe you are—and who you know you are—then you must endure this trial."

Just as I was about to respond, my mind recalled an unusual comment Erik made to my mother more than a year ago: "I don't believe your son is going to finish his mission." Naturally, my mom didn't know what to make of this declaration, but for me, the pieces of an intricate puzzle seemed to be coming together and a picture was starting to formulate in my mind.

Initially when Erik made his mysterious pronouncement, I had assumed that—if what he said were to come true—he was referring to sickness, or injury; something related to my well-being. After all, I had been plagued by unexpected health problems from the very beginning of my mission experience. However, I had never considered that the ramifications of my rebirth in Christ—which had slowly enveloped me over the course of two years until it culminated in outright astounding events over the past four days—would lead to the termination of my missionary service. I knew this radical change had set me apart from the other missionaries, but surely that wasn't grounds for sending me home...or was it?

"I had a strange feeling when you paged me that something was going

to happen, and I was afraid it would affect whether you finished your mission,” Erik said. “I even tried calling your parents to tell them, but no one answered. Now I understand why. This was always meant to happen.”

As the overwhelming reality of my predicament was setting in, I remembered an email Erik had written me just days earlier. The contents were so puzzling that I had printed it out and placed it on my nightstand. In light of my situation, its words now took on new meaning:

Sometimes we have to have something happen in our lives that shakes up our world for us to see what truly is important. With only three weeks left in your mission, I know that the trials will come at an even faster pace than before. It is at this time that we have to hold fast to the Lord. It is at this time that He shows Himself to us in so many different ways. Know that He will hold you up when others try to knock you down. Remember what Jesus said and store up for yourself treasure in heaven, where no man can take it from you. Your friend and brother, Erik³

Although I didn't want to accept the certainty of what was facing me, I vocally relented to the inevitable.

“I have a feeling after this interview everything is going to change. I don't think I'm going to be a missionary after today.”

“Micah, what was that scripture I gave you to read the other day?” Erik asked.

“I can't remember. Let me go look.”

I slowly stood up and walked over to my desk, my knees nearly buckling with each step. I grabbed my notebook (a rare, private niche where I had recorded—daily—nearly everything I had experienced over the course of my two-year mission) and sat down. Eventually I found where I had noted the scripture: Luke 21:12-19.

About a week earlier, Erik had called me and said that during prayer, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to have me read that specific passage. After hanging up the phone, he sent me the rather cryptic email as a sort of afterthought. I had read the scripture, but at the moment it didn't seem pertinent to anything that was taking place in my life, so I entered it into

my journal and had forgotten about it. Maybe today's activities would reveal its purpose.

"Did you find it?" he asked.

"Yeah," I said, skimming over the words.

"Well, read it to me," he insisted.

"They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness."⁴

Immediately after the words left my lips, I found myself speechless. I was beginning to perceive what might be transpiring, so I took a deep breath and kept reading with trepidation: "Settle it therefore in your mind not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends."⁵

There was stunned silence on the other end of the phone. I was now well aware that I had been shamelessly doing nothing more than speculating; we both had.

"Now I understand why I was to give to you that scripture," Erik said. "This passage isn't *about* you, Micah, but it is *for* you in this time. God has given an answer through His living Word, a pattern He has and will continue to use throughout your life. God has laid before you a blueprint of what is to take place, and now you must have faith that He will give you strength to do what He is asking. This is God's message to you of how to prepare. You need to read it again before you go."

I could feel my heart beating heavily. "Erik," I asked, "do you think this is what's going to happen to me? Could the Church really be planning to confront me for what I have discovered?"

"I wish I didn't, Micah. But this will be your time to bear witness of what God has done in your life. There is no more hiding it. This, therefore, is your test of faith. Only you can decide if it is time to take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ as the disciple that God is calling you to be. Even though you are weak, His grace will be sufficient for you. Trust the Lord. He loves you. There is nothing to fear."

Nothing to fear? Maybe he was right. Once again, I felt encouragement from my friend.

“I better get ready to leave, then,” I said, not wanting to get off the phone. “I love you, Erik. Pray for me. I’m so scared. I feel weak and helpless.”

“I will, Kid. The Lord is your Rock. Call me as soon as you can.”

As I hung up the phone, I slumped to my knees onto the blue shag carpet and began to sob. My head was pounding and my throat was so dry that my pitiful wails came out sounding like the distant honks of a lonely Canadian goose. My ship was sinking, and I knew that the earthly consequences of my newfound faith in Jesus Christ were far greater than I could fathom. I felt afraid, broken, and alone.

Once I had poured out my tears until none remained, I slowly stood up and finished getting dressed. My hands were shaking as I tied the Church’s decorative noose around my neck and completed the garb by dropping my nametag onto my suit jacket pocket—perhaps for the last time. Even though I had put on a tie and gone out nearly every day for the last two years and fought the world for the sake of my testimony, I knew this would become the greatest test of faith in Christ that I had ever been given, or perhaps would ever be given. Was I ready?

Lose Your Life

“What’s going on?” I heard behind me.

Oh yeah. . . Lucas! I was so caught up in the moment I had not only forgotten my companion was there, but I had also overlooked how he must have felt while hearing a confusing and frightful one-sided conversation on the phone. I turned and looked into his terrified eyes.

“We have to go to Leesburg so I can meet with President,” I said curtly.

“But why do you have to meet with President?”

Perceiving his anxiety, I smiled at him and put my hand on his shoulder. I spoke with as calm and soothing of a voice as I could muster, as if suddenly realizing I had just been cornered by a startled bear.

“I don’t know, Luki-Bear, but you don’t need to worry. Everything will be fine. I promise. This has *nothing* to do with you.”

Lucas gave me his characteristic half-smile, his head tilted. I pinched

him under the arm and he dropped his nervous front, chuckling and looking once again like a big, harmless teddy bear.

“Why don’t you wait for me in the living room? We need to leave soon.” Lucas was not yet satisfied that everything was okay, but he submitted, nodded, and slogged out of the room.

After I finished preparing myself, I went into the study, plopped down at my desk, and stole precious moments to compose myself and clear my head. The gravity of my situation weighed heavily on my thoughts. I supplicated with God to help me understand all that was expected of me now that I had been born again.

“Lord, if ever there is a time I have needed You, it is now. I am so afraid I can’t do this. Give me strength. Please give me hope through Your Word.”

I stared at my Bible in front of me on my desk. The leaves were torn and tattered—I had spent perhaps a thousand hours or more poring over its pages daily for nineteen consecutive months. And through it all, God’s love had been poured into my heart through the Holy Spirit.

With my hands quaking, I opened my Bible to the place where it had all begun, and although my concentration was shot, I was soon drawn to these words in Matthew 16:

Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?”⁶

My heart and mind were racing as I processed Jesus’ words. I knew that I had been washed by the water of the Word of God, saved by grace through faith, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and forgiven of my many sins. God’s immeasurable love had filled the gaping chasm in my heart. But now, Christ was beckoning me into discipleship, petitioning me to take up my cross and follow Him—even to the loss of my life.

The mere thought of the high cost I had to pay frightened me and made me feel guilty. After all, every facet of my life was so deeply entrenched in my religious identity: my family, friends, school, career path, relationships, reputation, hopes, dreams, earthly aspirations, culture, respect, and more.

I couldn't even fathom a life outside of that which I knew. Was I willing to walk away from everything the world had to offer?

Amidst my endless questions, I was certain of one inexorable truth: If I forthrightly told the mission president about my transformative rebirth—along with my new foundation of faith—I would undoubtedly lose the only life I had ever known and loved.

“God, what do I do? Show me!” I beseeched as I flipped just two pages forward and my eyes caught this inspiring passage: “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.”⁷

Immediately, the Word of God imprinted itself on my heart, and I wept silently to the point I could hear the teardrops hitting the pages of my Bible. I couldn't maintain the quiet for long, because my chest heaved forcefully as I tried to repress my emotions. The more I thought about what I had just read, the more I lost control and sobbed. This was not a cry of despair, but rather, a cry of joy. God had answered my plea by giving me exactly what I needed to hear at the moment I needed to hear it.

Through His Word, God had reminded me of this simple yet profound truth: Jesus was worth the loss of all things because His love was all-sufficient to satisfy my every need and grant me eternal life. Therefore, it didn't matter what I gave up, what I walked away from, or what my personal cost of discipleship would be. What I had found in Christ was infinitely greater than anything the world—or my religion—could ever offer me. Jesus was enough!

After I had unleashed my torrent of tears, I stood up filled with hope and looked out the window at the beautiful citrus tree in the backyard that was bearing fruit. It was now my time to bear fruit for God, and through His strength, I knew what I had to do: surrender my hopes and dreams, and submit my will to His. My life would no longer be focused on my pursuit of the world, but on Christ living in me and working through me as His vessel.

My journals sat next to me on my desk and I began fidgeting with my very first diary, nervously flipping through its pages. I stopped, at random, to one of my earliest entries and read. For two years now, every day, I had written about everything God had been doing in my life:

March 21, 2004: I am so excited to be a missionary of the Lord! (1) I know that I am in the true Church of God... (2) I know Gordon B. Hinckley is a prophet of God. (3) I know that Joseph Smith suffered greatly to restore the true Church on the earth in these latter days... (4) I know that the Book of Mormon is the Word of God. I know that it is another testament of Jesus Christ. Temples are the house of God and families can be together forever...⁸

This was the sincere testimony of a young and enthusiastic missionary that was so far removed from the man that stood in his place; I no longer recognized him. At the time I had believed those declarations with all my heart, but over the past two years, my testimony had morphed from four insecure pillars into one solid Rock.

Shaking my head in embarrassment, I picked up my most recent journal and turned to one of the last pages so I could see just how far I had come on this journey:

January 12, 2006: The more I find myself falling into the grace of Christ, the more the things of this world fade from my heart. I cannot turn my back from Christ and go against what I know I must do in my life. My heart is fixed on the Savior... It is my life that I place on the altar as an offering of love to Him who placed everything on the altar when He gave His life for me. I will give my life for Him. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.⁹

The clock struck 11:00 as Lucas and I meandered to the car. It was a beautiful day outside, with a hint of a breeze that alternated between very hot and surprisingly cold as it drifted ever so gently over me. In poetic ways, the wind washed and refreshed me. Standing in the warmth of the sun, I closed my eyes and lifted my face toward heaven. I took in a lungful of air and then slowly breathed out, struggling to calm my overactive nerves.

During the entire hour-long drive to the chapel, Lucas and I were silent. Inside my head, however, a deafening battle raged on mile after mile, each one marking a life-altering event over the past two years that had led me to this point.

My heart broke as I stole a glance over at my companion. He looked

petrified. In his innocence and naivety, he probably thought this had to do with him—that I had ratted him out to our superiors and was now deviously spiriting him off to the gallows. It didn't seem to matter how many times I told him otherwise. Sadly, he had experienced a long history of such betrayals during his time as a missionary.

We arrived at our destination and pulled into the empty church parking lot. Large willow trees gave shade to the sprawling property. As I sat in the car for a moment to gather the strength to face what lay ahead, I could see Lucas observing my every action with suspicion and misgivings.

“What’s going on?” he probed as we climbed out of the car.

“I don’t know, Elder. But you’ll be safe. You don’t have anything to worry about, okay?”

“Okay,” he said, forcing a smile.

I turned around and looked up at the empty steeple on the large religious edifice. As I did so, I reached up to my chest and grasped, through my shirt, the cross necklace that I wore as a not-so-hidden symbol among my peers of my faith and devotion to Jesus Christ.

“Here we go,” I said under my breath.

We walked up to the door and entered the building. Elder Lucas plopped down on the couch near the entrance and sighed, crossing his hands over his chest until they slipped down to his waist. Taking my seat beside him, I leaned over and rested my elbows on my knees, which immediately began bouncing out of control—a telltale sign of my nerves being beyond restraint.

Sitting there while awaiting my fate, the emotional drain on me was almost more than I could bear. I closed my eyes and tried to relax as I gripped the cross even more tightly in my hand. I could feel it digging painfully into my palm, but rather than paying it no mind, I gripped it even tighter. I understood that Jesus Christ had carried that heavy cross for me, and as His disciple, it was my turn to take up my cross, however small and simple, and follow Him—not by my strength, but by His.

Just as I opened my eyes, I heard a door open and close at the opposite end of the long hallway and I could feel a lump form in my throat. Even though I wasn't looking, I knew Sorensen was here.