

My World Turned Upside Down

By Alan Doerksen

"Mom, Dad, where are you?" I cried. I was scared.

Just a few minutes before, everything had been going fine. But then came the earthquake, and my world turned upside down.

My name is Ping. I am a six-year-old girl and I live in Sichuan Province, in China. In the last few months, my life has changed completely.

Back in May, I was enjoying life with my parents. We were living in our small home high in the mountains of Sichuan. The mountains here are very beautiful, and I enjoy hiking through them on my way to school each day.

On May 12, I woke up early in the morning and went to have breakfast with my parents. Each day, my parents and I enjoy a meal of hot *congee* (rice porridge) and a few vegetables that we grow outside of our house.

That morning was different, because my mother wasn't feeling well. She was still in bed when I got up, which is unusual. So I asked my father, and he told me, "Mom is feeling sick today. Let her rest, and you and I can make breakfast for her and for us."

I was happy to help. I love my parents very much, and they have always treated me well, even though I am a girl. In my town, many families have boys as children, but my family only had one child, me. My parents' friends would sometimes visit and say things like, "Ping is such a nice girl. Too bad she is not a boy, to help you out when she grows up."

I didn't understand that, but my mother would always tell me, "Don't listen to what other people say, Ping. We don't need to have a boy. You are a precious child to us."

That morning, I helped my father prepare some congee, and the three of us enjoyed it together.

"Thanks so much for your help," said my mother, as she rested in bed. "Ping, you are such a caring girl! Your father and I love you very much."

"That's right," said my father. "We always will love you, Ping. You can depend on us to take care of you."

I was so happy to hear that!

Suddenly, I noticed how late it was. The clock on the wall said 9:15. I was going to be late for school! Grabbing my books, I said goodbye to my parents and ran out of the door.

I hurried through the streets of my town on my way to school. Usually, there are lots of children walking to school with me. But today I was alone, because I had stayed to help out my parents.

I started worrying that my teacher would be mad at me for being late. But just as I saw the school up ahead, it happened.

The earthquake. I fell to the ground as the earth shook

very strongly. Buildings around me were shaking, and bricks and stones were falling everywhere. Just ahead of me, I could hear screams, and saw the school building shake. In a few seconds, the whole building collapsed right in front of me.

I screamed. Running forward, I tried to get to the school, but someone grabbed my arm and stopped me. Looking up, I saw an old man who said, "Don't go. It's too late."

"But my friends are trapped in the school, what can I do?" I protested.

Suddenly, I remembered my parents. What about them? Were they alright?

Quickly I ran back to my home to find them. But when I got there, the house had collapsed.

"Mom, Dad, where are you?" I cried. I was scared.

Going up to the house, I walked around, looking for my parents. "Mom? Dad?"

But there was no answer. Sitting down on a rock, I started to cry. Just then an old man appeared.

"What's wrong, little girl?" he asked.

"My parents are gone," I told him. "I think they were trapped in the house."

"Stay here. I will look for them," he told me. With him was a younger man who looked like his son. Together, they searched through the ruins of the house for signs of my parents. Finally, they came over and told me, gently, "We have found your parents, but they have gone to be with God."

"What do you mean?"

"They did not survive."

I was terrified. What could I do?

Then the old man told me, "Little girl, we have a home for orphans. We can take care of you."

I was upset, but these men seemed to be trustworthy, so I went with them. They took me to a place called the Ark Tibetan Handicapped Orphanage. There, I met many other boys and girls. Some are handicapped, but others are healthy like me.

Since I arrived here, the workers have been so helpful, treating me like their family. I miss my parents very much, but I am making new friends here. In fact, some friends of mine from my school were brought here a few days after the earthquake. They, too, had lost their parents.

Workers here have told me about God, who they say loves and cares for me. I don't understand, but I want to learn more. They say he is the Prince of Peace. My name Ping means "peace," so I hope I will find peace in my life. Please remember me.

"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you." *Isaiah 26:2-4*

Note: This story is fictionalized, although the Chinese earthquake did happen, and the Ark Tibetan Handicapped Orphanage does exist and has recently accepted dozens of newly-orphaned children. Please share this and other K4K stories with children in your family or church. You can obtain more such stories and material for younger children to introduce them to missions through our Kids-4-Kids (K4K) program. Contact our office for details.