

Disasters / The Story of Job

Tammy: For a week we watched on television this huge storm off the coast of Africa moving towards the United States. Some said it would go one way and some another way. How could we know if we were out of danger? As we continued keeping an eye on the storm, now named “Andrew”, we soon realised it would hit the coast of Florida...but where?

As Sunday drew near it became clear that the storm would hit somewhere near our home. We began preparing for the worst, knowing just how unpredictable these hurricanes can be. As my husband Ralf boarded up windows, I began gathering important documents and supplies to take with us for our 21 month old baby and our 8 yr old daughter. We planned to go to my parents’ house...to stay with my mother in case my father didn’t make it home from work before the storm.

As we left our dear little home, Ralf & I, with the children, prayed for God’s protection over it. It was God’s to do with as he saw fit. Little did we know just what God had in mind for that small home!!

Carol: Welcome to *Women of Hope*...I’m Carol...and you probably recognized Tammy’s voice. Today she’s going to share her story with us of going through Hurricane Andrew. Have you ever experienced a natural disaster? But before we hear more let’s talk for a few moments about different kinds of disasters. You may know all about living through a disaster – or you may know nothing about it. So today we want to share a little bit of information with you.

Tammy: A hurricane can be called other things in different parts of the world – in some places it’s a typhoon and in others a cyclone. But whatever it’s called it can be pretty frightening.

Carol: And then there are other disasters – like floods, earthquakes and tsunamis.

Tammy: And sometimes there is drought – and the crops won’t grow and many people are starving.

Carol: Or there is war – and many homes are destroyed and people are killed.

Tammy: How can people cope when there is so much tragedy? ...Homes lost, loved ones lost, people injured and hungry! Maybe you’re facing disaster, or even violence and persecution by your family or others. Does God care? And why isn’t he stopping these things from happening?

Carol: That's a good question Tammy – we'll talk more about that later. A disaster can make us feel totally helpless can't it? If we live in an area where we know that disasters can strike we need to do all we can to be prepared.

Here are some things we should do if we live in an area where there are known disasters:

- Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster.
- Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather earthquakes or floods to children.
- Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.
- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen.
- Explain what to do in each case.

Tammy:

Pick two places to meet: decide on them as a family and mention them regularly so everyone really knows where to meet.

...one should be right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire or earthquake.

...the other should be in a place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home - perhaps a relative's home.

- Have a plan for keeping in contact with others – and letting them know if you are ok.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation.
- Plan how to take care of any animals or pets.

Have clean water and dry food supplies packed, near the door, so everyone knows where it is...and a battery torch to take with you if possible.

Carol:

- Leave your home immediately if you are told to evacuate.
- Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.

Check every now and then that your batteries are working.

- Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes if you have them.
- Use travel routes that your local authorities tell you to use. Don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be dangerous, or you may not be able to get through.

You're listening to *Women of Hope* and we're talking today about disasters. Tammy you were telling us how you prepared when you knew that hurricane Andrew was coming. Please tell us what happened next...

Tammy: When we arrived at my parents' home, which was only about 8 kilometres away, we helped to put away loose objects from the yard and settled in for the evening. The wind started blowing strongly and the rain began to pelt onto the windows. I put the children to bed...hoping they would sleep through the storm. The noise grew louder throughout the evening and at 2 am the electricity was cut off. My father had made it home safely.

As the storm grew stronger and stronger windows and doors blew in. My father and Ralf held a bookcase and mattress against the front windows...two strong men used all their strength to try to hold back the force of nature. I woke the children and took them to a small room with no windows. I held them and tried to comfort them through the terrifying noise of the wind. We talked about how great and majestic God is to have created such a force. I sang with them.

Suddenly, there was quiet! Yes, the eye of the storm was passing over! We stepped outside...fences and power lines were down, shrubs & trees blown everywhere. We decided to move to our neighbors' house as it was stronger. Barefoot and in the rain I carried our baby to the next house. Ralf carried our daughter and my mother came behind him with supplies for the children. Dad followed, after making the house as safe as possible.

Oh, the joy of being with friends! We shared our faith in God even in the midst of the storm! We talked together as the storm grew stronger again. We learned that night that the stories of the 'back' of a hurricane being worse than the 'front' were so true. We moved to a small bedroom...ten adults and two children sitting on the floor listening to the hurricane swirl around us...tearing the coverings off the windows and breaking the glass. The roof was pounded...not only by rain and wind, but by objects being tossed around outside. I don't remember how long we sat there shielding the children, but I *do* remember my father with his back against the door using all his strength to keep it closed.

As the wind died down and the sun rose over the horizon we ventured out to see what "Andrew" had left for us. We could not believe our eyes...homes left totally destroyed, huge trees blown down, cars flipped over...debris everywhere! Ralf made his way through all the debris to our house to see what was left...and was amazed to find very little damage.

Thieves had already tried to enter our house but were put off by our alarm, which was still working with a backup battery...and our watchful neighbour. Praise God for good friends...and for answering our prayers for protection for our little home.

Hurricane Andrew had made its path directly over our little town...with the center of its eye passing directly over my parents' home. Nearby wind gauges broke at 200 mph. Homes were flattened and whole communities were lost.

Carol: What a story Tammy...you must have been so grateful to God for his protection for you all.

Tammy: We certainly were – but now the task of mopping up was ahead of us.

Carol: Yes – *after* a disaster we also need a plan to care for people...and when that's done to rebuild our community. Often there are outbreaks of disease after natural disasters, and it's important to organise clean drinking water and food, clean up rubbish and provide safe toilets. I expect that took a long time Tammy.

Tammy: Yes...we were soon able to get our little family home and start cleaning up the water damage and clearing out the debris. But our little family was untouched and together.

We came through the storm safely...unlike, many families who lost their homes completely...as well as losing family members to the storm. In the midst of our thankfulness we felt the responsibility of caring for those who had lost so much.

Soon after the storm we were provided with a telephone and our little home became a place of communication and a storehouse of goods for those who were hurting, and had nothing left. Complete strangers came in and out of our home constantly using the phone to get in touch with family and friends and to get help.

We supplied everyone who came to our home with food, water, and dry goods...let me say – there was very little “dry” anything around us.

Carol: You're listening to *Women of Hope* and Tammy's been telling us how her whole family survived through the destructive “Hurricane Andrew”. Praise God for his protection Tammy. Tell us...what did you learn from this experience that God took you through?

Tammy: What did I learn? If I had to do it again I could. Why? Because I know God is in control...and he is my strength. Our little family went through this together and we are stronger for it. We have discussed Ralf sending us away should another storm come close...but that's not an option for me. It would be harder for me to be away knowing he was going through a storm on his own, than to stand beside him and weather it with him.

In the same way, he and I encounter the storms of life knowing that our God is there to weather them with us. How great is our God!

Carol: On *Women of Hope* today you've been hearing Tammy's story of how she and her little family survived a disaster. But not everyone survives disasters do they! Why? We asked the questions before: Does God care? Why isn't he stopping these things from happening?

There is a very ancient and interesting story in God's word, the Bible, that shows us how one man came to think about suffering. This is the story from God's word.

There was a man named Job. He was a very good, upright man whom the Bible calls "blameless". He was kind to his many servants, and loved his large family. He was the richest man in the entire area and had a huge number of animals. It seemed everything was going fine for Job.

But because Job had faith in God and was such an upright man, he got the attention of Satan. Satan, or the devil, is a powerful, evil spirit who is the enemy of God - and of humans. Satan came before God to accuse God's followers. God said to him: "Have you considered my servant Job?" And listen to what God said about him... "There is none like him in the whole earth, a perfect and upright man, one that honors God and will have nothing to do with evil." (Job 1:8)

"Ha!" said Satan. "No wonder! The only reason Job fears you is because you've been spoiling him. You've protected him so nothing can happen to him. Take away his house and possessions and he will curse you to your face." To show Satan he was wrong, God said, "All right. Do what you like with his possessions, but do not harm his body. Test him and see if he remains faithful to me."

Swiftly Satan acted against Job. A number of disasters stripped him of all his possessions and his children. But Job, in grief and shock, still trusted God. We read: "In all this, Job did not sin, nor did he blame God foolishly." (Job 1:22)

The next time Satan came before God, God said, "See...Job remained faithful."

"Yes," said Satan, "but the most important thing to a man is his health. Take that away and you will see: he'll curse you to your face."

So God allowed Satan to take away Job's health, but told him to spare his life. (2:6) Job got horrible sores from his head to his toes. He was physically suffering - he sat in ashes and scraped his sores with a broken piece of pottery.

His three best friends and his wife thought it must be all due to sin, and urged him to confess his sin to God. They had no help to offer him. They had no comforting words for him. People who used to look up to him, avoided him and accused him of untrue things.

Tammy: You've been listening to the true story of Job from God's word, the Bible – here on *Women of Hope*. Can you imagine the suffering he went through?

Carol: Job did not know of the battle going on between God and Satan in the unseen world. Satan hated God. He wanted Job to curse God! But Job had great faith, and he knew what God was like. His suffering brought him closer to God, not further away. Sure, he complained: but listen to what Job said: (19:25) "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my skin has been eaten away, yet in my body I will see God. I will see him for myself. Yes, I will see him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought."

Let's stop and think about this for a moment. Job was sure he was innocent before God...and compared with others, he was a very good person. It must have been very difficult for him to listen to his friends discussing why he was suffering so greatly. And Job felt confused, because he had always thought that God would only allow *good* things to happen to *good* people. Yet even though he must have felt confused, he had one clear thought: "This matter is beyond my control: it is in God's hands" Listen to what he said: "God knows where I am going. And when he has tested me like gold in a fire, he will pronounce me innocent." (23:10) Job believed that he would be a better person, refined like gold, when he had come through this suffering.

Tammy: What amazing faith Job must have had in God's love - and his justice. He was confident that even though things might not look fair in this life, God's justice would be seen one day. I believe that too!

Carol: Well, let's go back to the story from the Bible. God did not explain to Job what had been going on. But after all the talk, God *showed* himself to his suffering servant. God showed Job his greatness in the things Job could see...the stars, the storms and the creatures of the natural world. Then Job understood how powerful and wise God is, and he was able to trust him for the things he *could not see* and understand. (Ch 42) That was enough for Job. He was content.

In the end, God restored Job's health and prosperity, giving him a family once again. He was better off than before his trial started. And he was filled with worship and praise, because he knew God in a much deeper way...
And that's the end of the story from God's word.

Tammy: So what did *you* see in that story?... It spoke to me about how little we understand compared with God.

Carol: Yes, so when we are hit by tragedies and disasters, we usually don't understand why they happen. But if we trust God, he will help us and give us the strength to carry on through the troubles. Have faith and hope in the goodness of our loving God who cares for you.

Tammy: I certainly proved that in the hurricane. I knew that he cared about us and loved us. I love that Bible poem where it says: 'You have collected all my tears in your bottle, you have listed them in your book.' (Ps 56:8). That tells me he understands and honors my sufferings and he can make me strong through it. He *does* hear our prayers in times of trouble and he *does* have compassion for us. He helped our family in amazing ways - I'll never forget it.

Carol: And the Bible assures us that God has a wonderful future with him, for those who love him. Like Job we can say, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will stand upon the earth at last... And I will see God for myself."

Tammy: What a *wonderful hope* we have. We sure are women of *hope*!

Carol: We must go now – but we will keep you in our thoughts and prayers until we come back next time. Goodbye and God bless you.

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