

Bahamian Survivor of Hurricane Dorian: 'The Devastation ... Was Totally Overwhelming'

On a recent trip back from the Bahamas to help deliver aid to victims of Hurricane Dorian, I shared a plane ride with an unexpected passenger. Her name was Bobby, and she was a dog.

Bobby was on her way to be reunited with her owner, Oswald "Ossie" Hall, who had been evacuated to Virginia a few days earlier. Hall dreams of returning to the Bahamas, but his home was completely destroyed in the storm.

Like many people, Hall felt fairly prepared ahead of Hurricane Dorian, having packed an emergency bag to grab in the event of an evacuation. But when the winds began to pick up on Sunday, Sept. 1, Hall realized there would be no escape. During the first few hours, Hall and Bobby huddled in a closet and waited for the storm to pass, listening as windows cracked and eventually blew out.

"I lost track of time at that point," Hall said.

After a while, the storm quieted. Looking at his barometer, Hall realized they were close to the eye of the hurricane, and he took advantage of the temporary calm to check on his elderly sister who lived in the apartment downstairs. When he reached her floor, he found her standing in 4.5 feet of water. Just then, the winds changed direction and picked up again, this time fortunately sucking the water out of the house.

"It came on like the longest, heaviest freight train that you could imagine," Hall said, describing the second wave of the hurricane. He stayed with his sister, and when the hurricane

finally passed, Hall began to survey the damage.

"My neighbor's house was gone, and my roof was gone," Hall said, as tears filled his eyes. "The devastation along the way—my friends' homes and my family's homes—was totally overwhelming. There wasn't one house, one building that wasn't touched by Dorian. It was heartbreaking."

Over the next few days, the brother and sister did what they could to survive. She slept on a wet mattress, while he slept curled up on top of a refrigerator that had fallen on its side. They ate what food they could find and drank water from a few bottles Hall had stored in his home until they were finally able to evacuate.

There was no room on Hall's plane for Bobby, so she stayed at an animal shelter until a friend of Hall's, who also happened to be our pilot, was able to retrieve her and take her to her owner.

Hall is anxious to return to his beloved home and begin the rebuilding process. "[With] what I left behind, a year is not going to do justice to the recovery that is actually needed," he said.

And he's right.

The needs are daunting and how long it will take to rebuild is unknown. But World Help is providing supplies like food, clean water, power generators, clothing, shoes and hygiene kits to victims of Hurricane Dorian. This is all possible through the generous help of our supporters—but we still need more people to join us in our relief efforts. And right now, all gifts up to \$80,000 will be matched, meaning twice as many storm victims will be helped.

"We're not going to get through this unless we all pull together and make it happen," Hall said. "You're my brothers. You're my sisters. And I hope you feel the same way. Thank you

for your help.” {eoa}

Noel Yeatts is the president of World Help, a Christian humanitarian organization. She's an author, speaker and an advocate for social justice and humanitarian needs around the world.