

From Jihadist Threat to Life-Giving Promise: One Couple's Journey

"If you go to Bible college, I will slice your throat and kill you!"

Those were the words Marty heard when she told the gang leader that she was going to leave the gang in order to attend Bible college. Marty had only been a believer a short time. As she lay on the floor with the knife at her neck, a song she had just learned came to her mind about the power of the blood of Jesus. And so she began to sing, "There is power, power, wonder-working power in the blood of the lamb ..." Marty sang it through twice, just waiting for the gang leader to cut her throat. After she finished for the second time, he dropped his knife and said, "Just go."

At Bible college, Marty met her husband Paul, and after they graduated, they got married and entered the ministry together. Late one night, her husband received the frightening message that a raging crowd of 2500 radical jihadists was on its way to the Bible school campus. Hearing that the bloodthirsty mob had already rampaged through a neighboring village, killing hundreds of people, Paul knew that he had to act quickly. He rushed to wake his wife and kids. Handing his 4-year old daughter to a student aide, Paul urgently commanded them to flee for the jungle. Then he raced through the campus, yelling at the top of his lungs. As the 132 staff and students frantically spilled out of the dorms and fled for the forest, the crazed jihadists rushed into the compound. Paul was one of the last to flee as the campus went up in flames.

Once in the jungle, Paul gradually managed to locate the hiding clusters of students. He started counting heads to see

if everyone had made it out alive. The number peaked at 130. Only two people were missing. One was his daughter. The other was the student entrusted with her care. Paul and Marty were overtaken with grief and anxiety. For four long hours, they feverishly searched in the darkness.

Exhausted, Paul took a few moments to rest on a giant boulder beside a river that snaked through the jungle. Pleading with God, he wept and wept. Suddenly, he heard a faint whimper coming from the river below. He quickly scrambled down the ravine to the edge of the water. Flooded with relief, Paul saw his small daughter. He held her tight and poured out his gratitude to God. A few hours later, the missing student was located. Everyone had survived.

That terrifying night was a turning point for both Marty and Paul. Before dawn, they had received a life-altering message from God: "It's bad to be lost. It's worse to lose those you love." In the darkness of the jungle, they gained invaluable insight into the nature of the Father's love for His lost children. In humility and gratitude, he recommitted himself to the passionate and urgent proclamation of the gospel.

Since that time, they've partnered with others to plant 54 radio stations. This has resulted in thousands of new believers and the planting of over 1550 churches. Twelve orphanages and children's centers have been launched. A Bible school is now up and running that has trained hundreds of future pastors, evangelists and radio broadcasters. God has done remarkable things through Marty and her husband. They trusted God to bring beauty from their trauma, and the results have been phenomenal.

As I've reflected on their story, I'm inspired and reminded of two truths:

1. God doesn't always protect us from trials and trauma, but He is with us in the horror.

2. If we will intentionally listen for God's voice—even during our trials—He will often birth a vision of how He wants to use that trauma for His glory!

It could be that, even as you read this, you've lost everything because of the flood waters in Houston, or perhaps you're facing the trial of sickness or financial strain. My question to you is this: Will you trust God to bring good out of your trauma? Will you intentionally create the space to listen for His voice? I'd love to hear from you.

Author's note: Marty and Paul's names have been changed to protect them as they continue to serve.

Becky Harling, an author, certified speaker, leadership coach and trainer with the John Maxwell Team, is an energetic and motivational international speaker inspiring audiences to overcome their greatest life challenges and reach their full God-given potential. Her most recent book is *How to Listen So People Will Talk*. Her husband, Steve Harling, is the president of *Reach Beyond*, a nonprofit organization seeking to be the voice and hands of Jesus around the world.

Connect with Becky at [BeckyHarling.com](#), Facebook or Twitter.

This article originally appeared at