

Oklahoma Tornado Survivors Share Stories From Inside Rubble

Survivors of the deadly Oklahoma tornado were able to return to the twisted remains of their homes in some neighborhood Wednesday afternoon, and chaplains Jeff and Terri Naber were with them immediately as they begin the process of recovery.

Plaza Towers

“Terri and I were in the Plaza Towers neighborhood in Moore, and we saw a little boy running around without a shirt on. I asked him where his shirt was, and he said he didn’t need it. He said it hurt his back, and it was itchy. Then he showed us the bandages across his back,” said Jeff Naber. The little boy had 14 stitches and some staples holding together a sizable wound.

“We began talking with his dad, who explained to us that his son was in the 3rd grade at Plaza Towers Elementary School and was trapped in the rubble of the building for over an hour alongside classmates who didn’t survive.”

They also met the little boy’s 6-year-old sister, who was running around alongside them. She remembered huddling with her friends in the school, and then opening her eyes and staring up at the playground equipment outside the school.

She had suffered head trauma, been knocked unconscious, and had been thrown from the school, but she survived.

“The father especially was emotional,” said Jeff. “We circled up with them and prayed with the whole family.”

‘It’s the Oklahoma Spirit’

Kris Allen Molskness, “Sparky” to his friends, was already in

“head’s up mode” after the previous day’s tornadoes when he decided at 2:30 p.m. on Monday to go get his kids from school in advance of the oncoming storm. With his children in his vehicle, they made their way out of the twister’s path and behind the storm.

His positioning allowed him to be one of the first people on the scene when the winds died down.

“Having a medical background and U.S. Army training, I knew that people were going to need medical assistance and help right away. So I hurried up and pulled into the 7-Eleven parking lot, or what was left of the 7-Eleven,” said Molskness. “I could hear people screaming and begging for help. There were four people at the front of the store.”

Molskness and the others tried to help one victim who was severely injured. “We started working on her and cleared her airway once and got her breathing again, and moved on to the people next to her and started triaging them.”

They returned to clear her airway a second time, rolling her on her side. Unfortunately, she didn’t survive her injuries.

“It was an emergency, and I don’t wish anybody to ever go through that,” said Molskness. “You know, I regret that my children had to see that. But it’s an experience that will make them stronger. It’s terrible that this had to happen to anybody, but you can only do what you can do.”

He continued: “The people of Moore, they’re no different than the people of any other community in Oklahoma. They’re strong spirited. We will build back bigger and better and stronger. It’s the Oklahoma spirit. We will survive.”

Saved by the Son

As the Nabers continued their ministry through the disaster zone, praying with and ministering to some 40 people over the course of three or four hours, they happened upon a

grandmother named Mona searching the rubble of her house with her granddaughters.

Mona was on the phone with her son, a police officer who was in his patrol car, as the storm approached. She thought about getting in her car to get away from it, but as she looked out her window she realized she was too late.

Instead she jumped into her inner closet and surrounded herself with pillows and clothes as her house disintegrated around her. Still on the phone with her son, their talk was emotional and spiritual in nature.

When the tornado hit, Mona's cellphone went dead and everything went dark. Mona has no idea how long she was buried in the rubble, but she could hear people moving around outside. She tried screaming, but nobody could hear her. Ultimately she used her cell phone to beat against the timber around her, and that allowed her son to find her and dig her out.

"It's pretty amazing analogy," said Jeff. "Just as Jesus, God's Son, has saved all of us who call on His name and brought us into the light, so Mona's son pulled her from the rubble and saved her."

Pray for Moore, Okla.

The recovery is beginning in Moore, but they have a long road ahead of them.

"The people here—from my experience—their countenance, the look on their face, was total shock," said Jeff. "They're standing in front of their house that is reduced to rubble, and in many cases they know that they just barely made it. You can see that expressed so obvious on their face."

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