

South Asian Widows Find Healing Hope in Christ

Widows like Swati Baidya and Mridula Das don't often hear that someone loves them. Swati and Mridula live in South Asia, where being a widow is something like being a pariah: Widows are kicked out of their homes, rejected by society and often find themselves begging for even a little something to eat. In spite of their lot in life, Swati and Mridula have found real hope in their lives.

Mridula's Story

Mridula is only 33, but she felt as though her life was over. This young widow was left alone with three children to feed when her husband died. And her society did not do anything to help. Rather, it blamed her for causing her husband's death.

As if Mridula's status in society wasn't bad enough, her life got worse when she started having serious health problems. She had to spend more and more of her meager earnings on medicine, but she kept working. She tried to work, but after several years of fighting her weakness left her unable to work.

When GFA-supported missionary Kerketta Rai started a prayer fellowship in her village, Mridula started going. She heard the gospel and began to understand the power of prayer. So she asked everyone who attended the prayer meetings to pray for her. As a result, she was completely healed. Slowly, she began to understand the truth about Jesus and she chose to give her life to Him.

In spite of her status as an unloved outcast in the rest of her society, Mridula has found the love of Jesus and she lives in peaceful harmony with her fellow believers. Rather than her previous life of hopeless existence, Mridula is now living a life full of God's blessings.

Swati Baidya's Story

Swati Baidya didn't think anyone would ever love her again. The 55-year-old widow was faithful to her traditional religion her entire life, but when her husband died she failed to find peace with the gods and goddesses she worshipped. Instead she was left lonely and scared. Swati also became ill and the bad health persisted for more than a year.

Thankfully her son and his family defied their society's tradition and decided to allow Swati to live with them. She had just gone to stay at her son's home when a Gospel for Asia-supported film team visited the village. Although Swati was staunchly devoted to the deities she had worshipped her entire life, she was curious about the movie. So she went to the center of the village where film team missionaries Jonathon Pashi and Dharmendra Gavit set up their makeshift movie screen.

Before the movie started, Jonathon and Dharmendra told the people the story of Jesus, whom the movie is about. They also told them about Jesus and His power to heal sickness and take away disease.

Swati was thrilled to hear about the God who could heal her! So she intently watched the movie and was amazed at what she learned about Jesus. After the movie she asked the missionaries to pray for her. Right after the prayer she began to feel better and she was amazed. She chose to follow Jesus right then.

However, Swati's choice has caused problems in her family. Her son and his family are dead-set against her attending the local church, where a GFA-supported missionary serves as pastor. They are threatening to kick her out of the house—and the family—if she persists worshipping the Lord.

Since Swati is a widow, she has nowhere else to go except the streets, so the choice to continue following Christ is

difficult. Swati asks for prayer that she will not lose faith but grow stronger during this time of testing. She also asks for prayer that her son will come to know Jesus as well.