

Were Angels Watching Over Tornado Survivors?

If you've never believed in **angels** before, this may change your tune. At least it did for one Henryville, Ind., family of five.

With a tornado bearing down on their home, Darrell and Tricia gathered their three children—ages 11, 10 and 8—stuffing everyone into an interior closet just like the safety videos would suggest.

But the EF-4 twister with winds estimated at 175 mph lifted the framed home some 50 feet off the ground—with all five still inside the closet—and carried it about 400 yards before it exploded into pieces.

Had it carried the home just 40 more feet, it would have landed in a nearby pond and Darrell is convinced his family would not have survived.

He is convinced the Lord was watching over his family.

“I need to tell you,” Darrell told Rapid Response Team chaplain Ginger Sanders. “It wasn’t just one or two angels, it was a whole team.”

As Darrell opened his eyes, he saw his children lying facedown on the ground and he feared the worst. But all three were still alive and spared severe injury.

His 11-year-old son suffered the worst with two broken vertebra, while his 10-year-old daughter was admitted to the hospital for observation but shortly released. His 8-year-old son was fine.

Darrell and Trisha were not so lucky.

Darrell's injuries included a broken jaw, broken shoulder blade, broken clavicle, broken sternum, as well as all 14 ribs broken.

Trisha suffered a broken pelvis, two broken ribs and a collapsed lung.

What remained of their house was in a nearby field, right next to the pond.

"We would have all died," Darrell told Ginger. "I was broken to pieces. My wife was broken to pieces. My kids were facedown in the dirt. There's no way we would've survived."

In the week after the March 2 storm, Ginger had the privilege of praying with Darrell and Trisha, who were able to get beds in the same hospital room. It was just the encouragement the Christian couple needed.

"As I prayed, tears just rolled out of Trisha's eyes," Ginger said. "I just told her to relax and take deep breaths. It's almost like breathing in the Holy Spirit.

"There was just a sweet spirit in that room. Her family was praying with them too."

Both Darrell and Trisha have been released from University of Louisville Hospital while their oldest son has been released from nearby Kosair Children's Hospital with a back brace. The three children are currently with their grandparents.

Healing is taking place all over Henryville as eight different chaplains have had the opportunity to pray with more than 500 people with several dozen accepting Christ as their Savior or rededicating their lives to Him. The Henryville deployment will likely wrap up at the end of next week.

"It's been an amazing walk," Ginger said. "God is doing great things here."

The two Rapid Response chaplains deployed to the Madison area prayed with more than 75 people over six days, including Joe and Martha.

Both the homes of Joe and Martha and their son next door were picked up off their foundation during the tornado and the couple was discouraged by all the damage and the loss of life in the community.

As the chaplains ministered, Joe and Martha said they were Christians but not completely sure what would have happened to them had they not survived the storm.

The chaplains led the couple in a prayer of assurance and just as they wrapped up, the three grandsons walked over and the chaplains started talking to them about spiritual things and all three prayed to receive Christ.

Praying with more than 200 people on the nine-day deployment to the West Liberty/Malone area, the two chaplains had the opportunity to talk with 82-year-old Ella Mae, who had been baptized before but had never made a decision for Christ.

Ella Mae prayed to receive Christ with the two chaplains in her room at the senior living center and the chaplains presented her with a Billy Graham Training Center Bible and other materials. The chaplains also prayed for Ella Mae's eyes and her overall health.

Six chaplains prayed with nearly 150 people over an eight-day deployment in Harrisburg, including Jack, who lost the roof of his mobile home during the Feb. 29 EF-4 tornado.

Jack, who was inside his mobile home when the storm hit, said he felt God spared his life just like He did two years ago when Jack survived a heart attack. But each time the chaplains gave Jack an opportunity to enter a relationship with God, Jack would quickly change the subject.

Focusing on the message, the chaplains steered Jack back to the gospel and Jack said he would like to give his life to the Lord.

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