

What God Taught This Evangelist When His Daughter Died on Christmas Day

God has used evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne to impact nations across the world with the gospel. And if you remember my Strang Report last week, you'll know that when he was only 5 years old, God called him from South Africa to minister the gospel in the U.S.

But despite the many revivals and spiritual victories Howard-Browne has experienced, his life is not without tragedy. In a recent interview with Howard-Browne, he shared with me how he and his wife, Adonica, lost their daughter Kelly on Christmas Day in 2002. She was 18 years old.

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"Kelly was born with a genetic disease called cystic fibrosis," Howard-Browne tells me. "So she nearly died at 11 months and nearly died at 3 [years old]. We moved to America when she was 3 years old, and at that time, she had moderate lung damage."

But some people didn't understand how a Spirit-filled evangelist's daughter could be so sick.

"A lot of people said, 'Well, you believe in healing,'" Howard-Browne says, "'How come your daughter wasn't healed?' But I said, 'Look, here's the thing you have to understand. Anybody who's anybody anywhere in the world who had a healing ministry in the 1980s or 1990s, they prayed for Kelly. We fasted and prayed for her many times. It was not like a healing from a sickness. We needed a creative miracle to take place because it was a genetic thing.'"

Sadly, God chose to take Kelly home that Christmas Day, but not without allowing her to live her life to the fullest. Despite the constant pain she experienced with her restricted breathing (cystic fibrosis damages the lungs and digestive system), she had big plans for her life.

Kelly had written down a vision God gave her about what she was to accomplish with her life. Howard-Browne and Adonica found that vision two months after Kelly passed away.

"I said, 'Lord, she won't be able to do this,'" Howard-Browne told the Lord when he found his daughter's writing. "And He said, 'Oh, you look at things so small. Don't you understand what's still to come?' And then I realized how limited we were in the whole thing."

Many have asked Howard-Browne how he didn't blame God for losing his daughter. But the evangelist says he made a choice the day Kelly died.

"When I held her in my arms on Christmas Day, I had to make a decision," he says. "Either the devil walked in here today and stole my daughter, or today I'm going to take her and put her on the altar. And I prayed on Christmas Day. I said, 'Lord, today, I give You my best gift. If I live another 50 years, I cannot equal or match this gift I lay on the altar today. But I make a vow of 100 million souls that the devil will pay and a billion dollars to world missions.' So that's what's led me down the course of the last 16 years."

Howard-Browne says Kelly's life impacted him in such a way that he would go through everything all over again even though he knew the outcome.

"God's ways are perfect," he says. "When we were going through this, He said to me, 'Do you trust me with your life?' And I said, 'Lord, I trust You with my life.' He said, 'No, do you trust me with your life?' I said, 'Lord, I trust You.' And then He said a third time, 'Son, do you trust me with your

life?' I said, 'Lord, I trust You.' And that was it. He didn't want me to even think about anything that I was leaving in His hands, not even concern myself about one thing—that I was to trust Him."

That healing moment bore great fruit in Howard-Browne's life. And in some ways, he experienced the blessings of Job. He now has six grandchildren, four of whom are girls. He tells me that the middle granddaughter, who just turned 10, looks almost exactly like Kelly.

After what they experienced with their daughter, the Howard-Brownes have great compassion on others dealing with horrible sicknesses. They started a healing school in Tampa, Florida, for severe diseases. People who are dying of different diseases come to the school to receive prayer and ministry.

God has lavishly blessed the Howard-Brownes, but that doesn't mean they will ever forget Kelly.

"I told Kelly just before she died ... 'You came from heaven to touch my life,'" the evangelist says. "And I said, 'I want to thank you, sweetie, that God sent you into my life.' And now, I know that sounds like a tragedy, but it actually isn't. It was a great victory for both my wife and myself and our whole family. God is good in so many ways."

I hope Kelly's story inspired you. We all need to be reminded at times that no matter what painful trials come our way, Jesus is enough to carry us through and satisfy our souls.

Listen to my entire interview with Howard-Browne to hear what Jesus taught him through his daughter's life and death. And be sure to share this article on your social media so others can be encouraged too.