



February 2017

Dear Friends,

Tornado number 5 of 10 hit our home at 150 mph, it was 800 yards wide, Monday, January 23, 2012.

There were miracles.

My friend sent a text asking if we were awake and then apologized for waking me, because she thought only our coworkers who lived in Fultondale needed the warning. I got up and helped her contact everyone. I heard the local meteorologist state a roof had been removed and there was unconfirmed damage. God impressed on my heart there was a tornado and we should take shelter. I awakened everyone and eventually convinced them to go to the basement. We still had electricity, thankfully, because we did not have batteries for our radio. I plugged it in and heard "It is now in Pinson heading toward Springville/Argo." I knew it was headed for us with the intensity of a freight train – or worse.

I stretched my arms up and thanked God for the protection He was going to give us. It seemed we were in the belly of the whale just like Jonah. Jonah thanked God for salvation while in the belly of that big fish. I attended a women's conference that weekend where we talked a lot about faith. At the conference a woman said that storms were coming, and one of us could be hit this weekend. I had watched Rev. Charles Stanley preach about perfect faith the night before. It was time to practice what I learned.

The electricity went out, and we heard a whirring wind. You could tell it was a circular wind. The house shook like a giant picked it up and slammed it on the ground. It crumbled like crackers on top of us. It took only seconds for our house to turn to rubble. The stairwell collapsed on my back, and I was doubled over on the bottom of the stack of people. One by one we realized each of us were still alive. We were covered in gas and had to maneuver through pipes, boards, and wires to dig our way out.

I almost parked the car outside the night before, but it was driven in. The cars being in the garage held the floor up enough to give us space to get out and gave our son shelter. I believe if he had been under the stairwell with us, we would have died, or would have been seriously injured, because there would not have been enough room.

All day afterward I envisioned myself standing and walking through a door to get out. Later I found out my daughter had the same thought. When getting back to the house, I realized that was not true at all. Jesus was telling us that He is the door and we walked through Him to get out. I raised my hands and praised God for His protection out in the pouring rain. I shouted, Praise God, we have lost nothing! We have our family and we have Jesus! God please use our lives!

The only room remaining upstairs was the inside bath. The foyer wall was attached to that bath, and a plaque of the word FAMILY still hung on the wall, even though many times I thought I should secure it better.

The things we prayed to find were found. I wanted my ESV Bible which has all my notes for several years. I asked for our laptops because of school. I also have hundreds of books, but asked for the four specific ones I was using currently for my classes. All four were found. God blessed above what we asked for and gave us all of our wallets, some photos, and some clothes. The most incredible thing I found was my iPod. I had been to the gym that day and paused it on a song. As I found it, I looked and couldn't believe the song was "Blessings" by Laura Story. The song talks about blessings coming through raindrops and literally says "What if trials of this life, the rain, the storms, the hardest nights, are your mercies in disguise?"

We also found an unbroken egg under our rose bushes after the storm. It wasn't our egg. Our eggs were unbroken and in the fridge rolled down the hill. This unbroken egg came through the tornado from someone else's fridge. This was God saying, "I'm with you. I have a plan. I have you in my hands and even though you may be as fragile as this egg, I will carry you through the storms of life!" The greatest blessing of this storm, even in all of the destruction is this egg. I have had the opportunity to share my story with hundreds of people, and this egg is such a symbol of our fragility as humans and strength in the hands of God. Children get the symbolism of this egg, and people have believed in Christ because of this miracle.

Our house was the worst on the street. While many were destroyed; ours was gone. Our roof was never found, nor much of anything of the top floor. Many of our neighbors still had their roofs, but their roofs weighed the rubble on top of them and they were trapped for hours. Ours being the worst actually helped us the most.

God has allowed Psalm 23:4 to come alive for me on many occasions **"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me."** We were in the shadow of death, and that night was a valley, and recovering from it was a long time in the valley, but once again God was with us.

You may be going through a fierce storm of life, but just as fragile as that little egg you may have assurance that you are not alone. God is with you.

Chaplain Kim Crawford

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."
Hebrews 13:16