

Katharine's Story / A Widow Gives

Tammy: 'One rainy Sunday, a year after her husband's death, Katharine sat in her deserted kitchen and cried, feeling that no one cared about her, a poor, lonely widow. She looked around at the house where all her six children grew up. It held many memories good and bad. Now it was empty. The children were grown and had their own homes. She was no longer needed. She had no job, no income, and wondered what was going to happen to her. How would she ever be able to give to others again? She couldn't even take care of herself.'

Carol: I'm Carol. Thanks Tammy for telling us the beginning of this true story. This must have been a very hard time for Katharine.

Tammy: It certainly was – do you want to hear what happened?

Carol: Yes...

Tammy: OK! 'Looking at the damaged ceiling, water spots on the floor, and torn walls, she remembered the awful night when a hurricane struck her area. She was alone in the house, and recovering from back surgery. The children had been good about helping her, but on that night, she was all alone. Just before the electricity went off, she heard the radio announcer say that a hurricane was headed her way.

The wind was blowing hard and she couldn't sleep with the sound of branches falling on the roof. Then she heard a heavy, frightening "THUD". She struggled out of bed and took a flashlight to the back porch. There she discovered that a huge tree had fallen on the house, and the rain was pouring in through a bedroom upstairs.

In the dark she went searching for towels and rugs to mop up some of the water. Then she felt in the cupboards for as many pans as she could find, to catch the water. It was pouring through the broken roof and the living room ceiling. All night, she sat and listened to storm reports on her little battery-operated radio her cat and dog huddled close by her chair.

In the morning, after the rain stopped, she called some people from her church. They came over to help get the tree off the house and cover it with a big blue plastic tarpaulin. One of them brought coffee and sat with her while the repair team worked all day with chainsaws and trucks. Later, her daughter and her family came and took her to their house, where she slept for hours. Her son and his wife came and took all the food out of her refrigerator and freezer. They took it to their home to put into their refrigerator and freezer to save it from spoiling. The next day, another daughter came to take Katharine to her home. She was very grateful that they all took such good care of her.

After a few days, when the power was back on, she moved back into her damaged home. So many houses had been damaged by the storm so it would be months before her house could be repaired.

Trent, the friend who had led the clean-up team, came by some weeks later to remind her that she couldn't stay in the house during the winter. It was not safe to heat, and another heavy rain could destroy what was left.

"What am I going to do?" she thought. She didn't even know how to find a place to live. She didn't want to leave this dear old home wounded as it was.

And so there she sat in her deserted kitchen. Katharine cried out to God in her fear and loneliness. She so missed her husband and wondered what was going to happen to her. But, you know, God had it all under control.

He heard her cry and sent a lovely lady to talk to her about what she needed. She took her to look at some apartments. None of them felt like home, and they were not large enough for her furniture or for her family to come and visit. And anyway, how would she pay the rent?

On that rainy Sunday evening, Trent saw her at church and asked, "Found a place to live yet?"

"No," she said, close to tears, "there's nothing in this town that I can live in."

Casually he said, "The house next door to me is for sale. I'd buy it if I had a good tenant to rent it. Want to look at it?"

The next day she went to the house and knew right away it would be a happy home for her. It had a big fenced-in yard with a sandbox and swings for her grandchildren to play on and plenty of room for her furniture. But she still didn't know how she would pay the rent?

God heard this cry too, and sent an old friend of her husband's, who sold her damaged house at a surprisingly good price. She had a home to live in and money to pay the rent. Her heart was full of praise to God. This time she sat down in her kitchen and said thank you to God for taking such good care of her – a poor widow. She not only had enough money for the rent but she was also able to give some money to help with the work of the church.

After a few years, she decided to purchase a home, and God again heard her cry and led her to just the right place.'

Tammy: I visited Katharine in her new home. She was so happy. She is a person who loves to give. She has always given money to the church. And the church gives to people who are in need.

Carol: Are you a person who likes to give to others? But maybe you feel like Katharine did. Maybe you don't have money to give. You may only have enough to take care of your own family. Or maybe, like Katharine, you wonder how you're even going to pay for what you need.

Tammy: You know, friend, God knows your need and he sees your heart. He knows that you want to be able to give something to others. Let's think about what we can give.

Carol: If we don't have money to give, we can give our time to others. Maybe someone needs you to spend time with them.

There were people who gave to Katharine weren't there. Do you remember – she said one lady just sat with her while they took the tree off her house.

Tammy: And her family gave her lots of help didn't they! Her son and his wife helped to save her food from spoiling.

Carol: And her friend Trent showed that he cared about her too. How do you feel when someone asks you how you are, and shows that they care about you? It makes a difference doesn't it especially when you're feeling sad and lonely like Katharine was.

Tammy: And all the people who helped her gave her something can you think what that was? What do you think Carol?

Carol: Well, I guess in some way, they all gave her love didn't they! They showed her they loved her in many different ways. Is there someone in your family, who needs you to show them kindness and love right now? Or maybe you have a friend who needs you to just spend some time with her. Maybe she needs you to give her a listening ear. She may need to talk to you about how she's feeling. And just listening to her will make her feel better. It will make her feel that someone cares about her.

Tammy: You know, many times I've felt I had nothing to give to help other people, because it was hard to pay my bills. When I prayed, God always sent help. Sometimes it was payment for a job I had done, or just someone to encourage me. One time, a friend shared a delicious meal with me because she heard I was sick and feeling depressed.

Carol: Yes. As we said, there are many ways we can give to others. Like your friend, we can cook meals, or just take time to make a telephone call or stop by for a visit. Yesterday I took care of my neighbor's children for a couple of hours because she had to take her oldest to the doctor. We had a great time making cookies.

Tammy: Sounds like it was fun for you too, now that your kids are all grown up.

Carol: And do you know, this is what God wants us to do. He made us and he loves us. And he wants us to show his love to others. That's how God is. Any time I do something for him, like helping other people, it always brings me more happiness too.

Tammy: Carol is going to tell us a story from God's word, the Bible about a woman who had nothing left. She thought she was preparing her last meal, and God surprised her by sending someone to ask her for food. But how was she going to give to him?

Carol: It's an amazing story it reminds me a little of Katharine's story when she thought she was all alone and out of money. Here's the story from God's word, the Bible.

(I Kings 17:7-16) 'There was a poor widow who lived with her son. A famine had dried up all the crops in the land. She was out of food.

One day a prophet of God named Elijah came by. He asked her for a drink of water. As she was going to get the water, he asked her for a piece of bread.

Now she wanted to be kind to the stranger, but she had to tell him, "Sir, I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son that we may eat it—and die."

Then the prophet said a strange thing to this woman who was about to starve. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Go home and do as you have said."

Before she could turn around, he said something stranger still. "But first, make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me." '

Let's stop here for a moment and think how she must have felt. Can you imagine? She was going to make some bread for herself and her son, but this prophet wanted her to make him some bread first from her last flour and oil!

How would you feel? I think I would want to say that my son and I needed that last bit of flour and oil and we didn't have enough to make some bread for him first. But let's go back to the story and see what happened before she could even give him an answer.

'He said to her, "Afterward there will still be enough for you and your son. For this is what the Lord God says. There will always be enough flour and oil left in your containers until the time when the Lord sends rain and the crops grow again."

So she did as Elijah said, and she and her son and Elijah continued to eat from her supply of flour and oil for many days. For no matter how much they used, there was always enough left in the containers, just as the Lord had promised through Elijah.' This is the end of the story from God's word.

Tammy: You're right Carol. That is an amazing story. And it's a true story that happened long, long ago. I wonder what God is telling us through this story?

Carol: I think this story is in God's Word to teach us how much God loves us. At times when it seems we have nothing, and we are down to our last penny, he wants us to call out to him. He wants us to trust him to provide for us.

Tammy: As we said before, sometimes it isn't food we need. Sometimes it's an understanding friend, or someone to help us with a job that's too hard for us or we need hope for the future.

Carol: Remember how sad the widow in our story was, thinking of her son dying of starvation? God's loving heart hurts for us, his dear children, when we are sad or afraid. Just as God saw the struggle of this poor widow, and sent his prophet to help her, he knows the needs of his children, and loves to take care of us. He took care of Katharine too in very unexpected ways didn't he? Do you feel like crying out to God today? Are you lonely and facing changes you wish you didn't have to make? Are there frightening decisions you need to make? Maybe you don't know where your next meal is coming from just like the widow in our Bible story. In God's Word, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life"(John 14:6). He came to show us the way and to show us how much God loves us and cares for us. He tells us that God's word is truth and we can trust God because He loves us so much. He wants to give us life – real life here on earth, and after we die, in heaven with him forever!

Tammy: It's almost time for us to go now. But before we do would you like to hear how God answered the prayer of one of our listeners?

Carol: Yes, let's do that.

Tammy: A lady from South India wrote to tell us: 'I am from a very poor family. I have been very sick. It was cancer and the doctors said that they had no treatment for me. We spent a lot of money but it didn't help. One day I met a Pastor who came to my village and he started praying for me. He did so whenever he came to our village. He would visit my family and then pray for me before leaving. During those visits, I started believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and that he could heal me. Then someone from Trans World Radio visited my village and gave me a radio to listen to the Word of God through your program. I started listening to it and began trusting every word. I prayed earnestly to God. It was a surprise to me when I started feeling better. God

answered my prayer and healed me. The program is therefore very precious to me. I encourage others to also listen to it.'

Carol: That's a wonderful answer to prayer just like the poor widow who thought she was going to eat her last meal and die. And God answered this lady's prayer too. Now she is still living, and she has put her trust in God and his word.

Will you trust God today? He loves you and will answer your cry for help. If you would like to write to us and ask us to pray for you, please do that. The address is... You may like to tell us your story.

Tammy: Thank you for spending time with us today. We have really enjoyed spending time with you. And maybe there's someone who is just waiting for you to spend some time with them too. Goodbye and God bless you as you trust him to provide what you need.

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