

THE GREAT ESCAPE

December 16, 2011, between 7 o'clock in the evening to 12 midnight, a not so heavy rain, but accompanied by a strong force of blowing winds, began to strike Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City, here in the Philippines. Unknown to any of us (as we were all deeply asleep), the unexpected happened.

At approximately 1 a.m. of December 17, the water began to surface at knee level. My housemate and a sister in the Lord, Febra, were awakened due to the foul smell of mud-dirt that had emerged inside our house. So, she started alarming me by knocking on my bedroom wall (as my room was in between hers and Juliet-my other housemate and sister in the Lord). I was still half asleep when I lifted my left hand to check if water had made its way again into our house (this was not the first time we've been hit by a flash flood, 3rd time in fact and the worst). Ate Juliet at the same time was alarmed at the knock and the noise of our neighbors. Everyone in the neighborhood was all in startling panic. Frantic voices were heard all over the place (adult and children alike); and we realized, it was too late for us. No electricity, all black and dark.

When I stood up, water was on my waistline level. I tried not to panic and composed my will and mind what to do and what not to do at that time. I heard Ate Juliet shouting that her door couldn't be opened due to the force of water inside her room. Febra was hysterically screaming that we should all go out before the flood reaches our heads. The two of them went out, trying to open the front door so we could go out. The door was powerfully locked, and could not be opened. They called me to help them open it; I was still inside my room looking for my laptop and was praying (I told the Father that if He has still to save me physically, He has got to save my laptop. Sounds demanding, but deep in me was an assurance that He will, and He did.) When I stepped down, water was now chest level. Fear began to surface in me but amazingly, in my innermost part, I was all in calmness and just knew what had to be done. So, I had with me my laptop and its charger inside my bag (the battery was soaked under water), I lifted it up while the three of us were looking for a possible way of escape. Everything was floating; the refrigerator hindered our way to the kitchen. Since we couldn't open the front door (which the Father purposely done so, I'll talk about it later) we decided to get through the back door. The water now rises every two seconds, when we were outside the back door the water was already at neck level. We had no other way out except to be on our roof. Problem was how could we get there?

We were able to emerge above water because of a big, large stone tank that was rested at our back area. The three of us endeavored and struggled to climb to the top of our roof. The wall that divided our house from the other side was the only means we could go up. It took us almost an hour before we could finally situate ourselves over the top. As we were struggling, I threw my laptop on top of the roof and prayed that it would just be ok (My laptop by the way has all the records I needed in both of my studies and job, that's how valuable this is for me). Then, I helped myself to the wall. The reason why it was taking us so long is because the wall is bordered by barbwire. As soon as we reached the edge of the wall, we got stuck and trapped- the reason for our bruises and cuts all over our arms and legs.

The last one to get to the top was Febra (She's practically the weakest among us three, physically). I had to stay with her and grab her by the hand. I almost lost her because I was already losing my grip because I wasn't very strong then; ants crawled on me and bit me. Had I left her, she could have died. Thankfully, the Father sent two men for our rescue. Ate Juliet was yelling for help while same others in the neighborhood shouted the same cry. The men then joined their forces in helping Febra. The three of us were together again on top of our roof.

We had to leave the roof as it started to rain and we were already soaked with water. We had to be on a higher ground. So, the two men sent by God, made a way for us to transfer ourselves to a better place. They provided two large bamboo sticks for us to get to the other side to be sheltered.

By 5 am, when a bit of light now appeared, we learned that water was 20 ft. above the ground. If we were stuck inside our house, the three of us would have died. The water surpassed our ceiling and it wasn't just water but mud dirt (The reason why a lot of people and animals died). It was then that we realized that had the Father opened the front door of our house, we would be among the pronounced dead.

Properties accumulated and acquired during the years were damaged and destroyed. Our house was totally wrecked. Although we managed to get back and check if we could still find something that can be restored, only few clothing like our uniforms were picked up with dirt and mud all over.

By the morning, Brother Wennie, whom I contacted came right away to get us from where we were, but it was only until the water level goes down to above knee level that we decided to pass through and be with Brother Wennie to his house and be cleaned and washed.

The first night after what happened, we were not able to sleep. It created in us a trauma, if that's the term. Our bodies were tired, exhausted and drained after the shock. We couldn't seem to get our minds off thinking what had just freshly happened to us. No matter how much we tried to close our eyes, our minds just continues to talk about it.

Brother Wennie and his wife, Ate Fidela, were the very first persons used by the Father for us. They held us with all love and concern that we felt deeply in our hearts. They provided food, water and shelter. They let us stay in a most comfortable house with complete relaxation.

The main city of Cagayan suffered from scarcity of water, because the water dam exploded during the flood. But at Brother Wennie's house, water was abundantly flowing and we were all provided with what we needed, including clothing. We had to buy our undies though but the basics were there.

Then came the calls, texts, and messages from people whom I have known to have loved me and cared for me. I felt the Father's love towards me multiplied. I could cry for what happened, but I could never barter the overwhelming experience of His love that He made evident towards me by those people whom He used to make me say this: "I love Your ways for they are perfect, You are forever in your throne and You are seeing us through"

Truly the Father, when He told me, "Be true to your own best experience of me", I held on to that. We may have lost our valuables, materials, and stuff dear to us, but the reality of the truth being temporary here on earth has utterly registered into our souls. We became conscious of the fact that things are not really ours even if you had possessed it into your care. He is the Source and He has all the right to take it away anytime. We don't hold to the things He gave us, we hold on to the Source.

Even after the devastation, we have tasted and seen how the Source had already provided the supply before the need. He had so orchestrated everything for all things to work according to the perfection of His will. We are so blessed to have been part of this working that He determined to happen.

Thousands died of that tragedy, hundreds too are still missing. In fact, our experience was so light compared to the others.

He has caused changes in us - a growing dependence upon His Son. While I was still making my way to get out of the house, deep within me was praying...I know it was Christ...and it built in me the confidence that He is seeing us through right from His throne where we were also seated in Christ. My outward appearance might have been disturbed but my inward man was and has always been intact and in position by the grace of Christ in me. I understand that because I am in union with Him, everything is at His disposal, realizing that I felt so relaxed. Febra had seen it in me. When we were talking about our experience, she commented that I was so relaxed and calm...then I told her, it was Him - His strength, His peace, His all.

I thank the Father because He is Love. This has been evident towards me. I believe Ate Juliet and Febra felt the same. As the song goes "How can I keep from praising your name, How could I ever say enough How amazing is your love...."

Finally, let me just say this: It was all fine with me if I was going to be taken by the Father. I told myself, "wow, if this will be the end of my days on earth, I'd be very glad to be there with you Father...eternally." But deep within me was also the assurance that He is not taking me yet and, true enough, here I am able to write this testimony...then again Phil.1:21; 4:13 remains very true to me:

For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. And, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Please send me Life in the Son magazine as they were all washed out. I need copies. Thank you.

Born again in His Love,

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