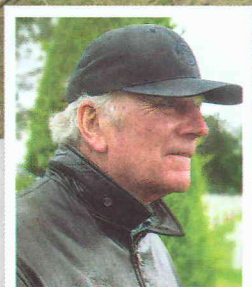




TRAGEDY IN TEXAS

GUADALUPE RIVER FLOODING TAKES DEADLY TOLL



DEAR FRIEND,

During a holiday weekend that was supposed to be filled with celebration, Texas families were hit

with unimaginable loss. Flash floods along the Guadalupe River overwhelmed parts of the Hill Country early on Friday, July 4, sweeping away vehicles, camp cabins, and homes. Across Texas, more than 130 people lost their lives in the storms, with many still missing.

Samaritan's Purse arrived the next day in Kerr County, the hardest hit area where most of the deaths occurred. Joined by Billy Graham Rapid Response Team chaplains, our volunteer teams are out helping homeowners in Jesus' Name. We have a second site in San Angelo, which also suffered severe flooding. Hundreds of homes have been inundated. Teams are hard at work cutting through massive cypress and oak trees, scraping out river mud from battered homes, tearing out damaged drywall, and spraying to prevent mold growth, which happens quickly in the Texas heat.

Lilia Herrera awakened at 3:30 in the morning to the sound of "a howling, horrible noise." She opened the front door and was shocked to see the Guadalupe River flooding toward her home. Local officials reported it rose more than 25 feet in under an hour.

She knew she had to escape with her husband, Joe, who has Parkinson's disease. They tried to flee to higher ground, but the water was running too fast for Joe to make it through. That's when a neighbor, Ram Rodriguez, appeared. He tied a tow strap around himself and Joe, and led the family to safety. "I just thank God that I was there and able to help," Ram said.

Lilia and Joe (pictured below) survived, but their home was ruined. Samaritan's Purse volunteers spent two days working at their house to salvage what they could. "It just means so much for them to be here helping us," Lilia said.

Their hearts were fertile ground when chaplains came to talk with them. They talked about repentance, faith, and peace with God. When Lilia heard about starting a personal relationship with the Lord, she shouted, "I want that!" Tears of relief flowed from their eyes and bright smiles spread across their faces as Joe and Lilia prayed to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

"I'm so happy!" Lilia said. "I now want to follow Jesus the rest of my life."

We're also helping Rosa Toler and others in her riverfront neighborhood between Hunt and Ingram, along Highway 39. My son, Edward, spoke with her while he was in Texas comforting hurting residents and supporting our volunteer teams.

Rosa said she awoke to desperate screams as a torrent of water rushed through her community. "It was apocalyptic," she said.

She emphasized that some people simply had no chance to flee before the water rushed through their homes; others had only seconds. She barely



escaped and grabbed onto a passing kayak, saving her life as she can't swim. She then began helping elderly residents she knew in the neighborhood—rescuing one lady huddled in an attic. Rosa was grateful that our teams could mud-out her home and prepare it for contractors to restore.

The greatest need is prayer. Please join me in lifting up those who have lost loved ones and the hundreds who lost so much in a matter of minutes. Keep our teams in your prayers as we respond to this tragedy and offer the hope and comfort only Jesus Christ can provide. *"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted"* (Psalm 34:18, ESV).

"It's a New Beginning"

I'm in Alaska for our 14th season of Operation Heal Our Patriots. Every Sunday we bring in a new group of wounded veterans and their spouses for a weeklong marriage retreat led by former military chaplains. Couples are greeted by a cheering, flag-waving crowd of residents, staff, and volunteers. It is always a privilege for Jane Austin and me to welcome them as they step onto the gravel runway.

They go through daily, Biblically based classes designed to strengthen their marriages, they are also able to enjoy wilderness excursions in God's beautiful creation, including fishing, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

Some of them have wandered far from God. Some are angry at Him and at each other. Couples often bring up tough issues that have severely strained their relationship. We always share with them truth from God's Word and the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the only hope for salvation and true change. And when the Lord changes hearts, He heals hurting marriages. So far this year, 56 people have made decisions for Christ, turning to the Lord in repentance and faith. We give God all the glory.

On Fridays, we wind up the week with a time for marriage rededications and baptisms in the cold waters of Lake Clark. We rejoice that 37 couples have renewed their marriage vows before God and 54 individuals have been baptized during the first seven weeks.

Army Sergeant First Class Ben Creek served over two decades in the military, deploying twice to combat in Iraq and once to Afghanistan. He and his wife, Amy, had recently quit years of alcohol abuse and came to Alaska seeking a new start. We praise God that they both found new life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amy said, "We've learned how to bring Christ into our marriage and our lives. It's a new beginning."

Will you please join me in praying for the nearly 170 military couples who are traveling to Alaska this summer? We're trusting the Lord will do great things in the lives of these American heroes who have sacrificed so much.

Sincerely,


Franklin Graham

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

■ VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are needed across the United States at our disaster relief and rebuild sites. Please go to spvolunteer.org to find the latest opportunities.

■ PRAY FOR MILITARY MARRIAGES

Ask God to strengthen the marriages of those who attend our Operation Heal Our Patriots retreats this summer. Nearly 170 couples are scheduled to come. God hears and answers the prayers of His people.

■ WHERE MOST NEEDED

Your gift to "Where Most Needed" equips Samaritan's Purse with the resources—including personnel, materials, supporting services, buildings, and equipment—to fulfill our worldwide mission of relief and evangelism.



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All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Contributions are solicited with the understanding that Samaritan's Purse has complete control over the use of all donated funds. Our Board-approved policy is that all gifts designated for a specific project be applied to that project, with up to ten percent used for administrative and fundraising expenses. Occasionally we receive more contributions for a given project than can be wisely applied to that project. When that happens, we use these funds to meet a similar pressing need. It is our policy to meet the needs God lays before us, so that Christ is lifted up and the Gospel advanced.

Combined Federal Campaign #10532

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