



Hope in the Midst of Great Loss

Malawi update from Martin Simiyu

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Four months ago Malawi experienced the biggest disaster the country has ever experienced. Cyclone Freddy swept fields ready for harvest, destroyed livelihoods, wiped out whole villages, killed many, injured several, and made thousands displaced and homeless. Possibilities Africa was quick to arrive on the ground to learn how our ministry partners in the villages were affected. We initiated an emergency program dubbed one-dollar-a-day for one month for those involved in our training.

In May, I went back to review how our help impacted families. As I started my journey, I expected to meet huge desperation. Everywhere on the ground are the boulders that washed from the mountains and came flooding into the villages crashing huts, shops, and fields. There are many new river paths and valleys created by the raging floods. Being my first trip into two of the villages since the cyclone struck, I wondered how anyone escaped them, if not only by God's divine hand.

Although there were painful stories, the joy, energy, hope, and the general spirit to move on that I witnessed was prominent. I found a people who are quickly moving away from telling the story of what happened to focusing their energy on how to remake their livelihoods. This sounds hopeful but you cannot fully appreciate it until you realize that these people want to rebuild devastated villages, covered by an avalanche of rocks, and without government or any other support.

They are largely on their own. They have no savings or investments or insurance. Their only source of income, their fields, were washed away in the floods.

One may never know where such resilience comes from. I would guess partially it is because of the years of difficult life which has hardened them. But I am convinced that it is also because of

IMPACT STORY

Pastor White Kaleso is a champion leader in Malawi, who has been instrumental in helping us disburse the emergency fund in his area. The lessons he learned from PA helped him and others in his community to remain economically stable during the time of Cyclone Freddy. He has a garden he planted immediately after the floods and which he and his son continue to nurture. He testified that before meeting PA, he did not invest much in farming. But after the training, he has taken on farming to help his family have a stable income. We found him working with his son, teaching him how hard work pays.



the real hope that they have in what God can do for them. **Their faith and hope in God are real.** Their love for one another was contagious, evident in how those who still had

a hut standing took in several other families to share the little space and food they have.



In addition to his garden, Pastor Kaleso has also mobilized his church to start and run a children's daycare center which he started after he learned about mentoring the next generation from PA. He and his church decided to put resources together to start investing in the children at an early age.

Specifically, for those in the PA program, it was obvious that belonging made a difference. While others are still waiting for what the government may come and do for them, those in our program have a support network where they are praying together, their pastors are encouraging them and through their small table banking they are working together to find a way forward.

In one of the meetings with pastors and leaders, they said to us that they do not want us to give them food or to rebuild their houses. *"We only want you to give us the capacity (loans) for us to plant our gardens, revive our small businesses and we will build our own houses and provide our own food."* While they were grateful for what we had done for them in the initial weeks following the devastation, they did not ask for handouts but instead they are seeking ways to provide for themselves.

In the coming weeks and months, we will be working with them through their groups to strengthen the table banking activities so as to give them additional capital to lend out and enable their members to rebuild their businesses and livelihoods.

With your support, we will help these communities rebuild one household and one village at a time... **Because with God all things are possible!**

Thank you!

Martin Simiyu

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