

Charity

by Jill Briscoe

The sermon tells the story of Charity's experience in prison and how she and her fellow students learned to trust in God's love and presence in the midst of suffering.

Scripture: Matthew 5:44, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:6, James 5:16

Topics: "Faith And Prayer", "Persevering In Suffering"

Description

Jill Briscoe shares the powerful story of Charity, a courageous young student in Uganda who faced persecution for standing up against injustice. Despite the brutal treatment by soldiers, Charity and her fellow students found strength in their faith, praying for peace and forgiveness even in the midst of suffering. Their unwavering trust in Jesus brought them joy and comfort, demonstrating the transformative power of prayer and reliance on God in times of trouble.

Transcript

Hark wondered about Charity, one of Festo and Mera's four daughters. Charity was a student at the university in Kampala. Hark decided to find her. He wanted to see what Uganda's young people were doing about the awful things that were taking place.

"Well, it's as I thought," Hark said to himself when he arrived. "The students are getting ready to hold a meeting. They're going to protest what's happening. But I don't think President Amin will like it."

"Let's get together and pray," one of the Christian students said to the others. "We can ask God to show us ways to stop the killings."

Seeing them pray, Hark thought of how Jesus loved all young people. He helped them to be brave and bold. When they came to know the Lord, they served Him with their whole hearts.

Flying around the school grounds, Hark finally found Charity. She was quietly reading her Bible before her class. Hark peeked over her shoulder and read the name on her book. "Charity Kivengere," it said.

"So this is Charity," Hark exclaimed. He was delighted to find her. He had just settled down beside her when one of her friends ran into the room.

"Charity, the other students want to stop going to classes. They're calling it a 'strike.' They say that will show the president how upset we are about what his soldiers are doing," the friend said. "They think if he

knows how angry we are, he might listen to reason. Then maybe President Amin will stop the killings."

Before Charity could reply, there was a big noise outside. Hark flew through the window (even though it was closed). He could see that the students had locked the gates of the school. They wanted to keep the soldiers out. But now the army was ramming the gates to get in!

"Look out!" shouted a student watching from a top window. "The soldiers are putting ladders against the walls. They are climbing over to get to the school grounds!"

Sure enough, the rough soldiers were coming over the walls. They rounded up the students who had been protesting. They hit them with the ends of their guns. Then they made them crawl through mud and stones to get to the trucks. The students tried to get away. But 200 of them were shoved into the trucks and taken to a terrible prison.

The students were jammed together into the trucks just like sardines! They couldn't even sit down. They were very frightened. "What will the soldiers do to them?" worried Hark. Then he gasped. He had spotted a face he knew.

"Oh no!" he cried. "They're taking Charity!"

At the prison entrance the students had to pass a soldier holding a club with spikes in it. As each young person came through the door, he beat the student with the club. Standing in line, Charity began to pray.

Hark wished he could help Charity. But he knew he was seeing something that had already happened. Hark could not change it. But he stood by Charity, hoping his presence might comfort her. He knew angels were God's messengers, and he was glad he could be here.

Standing close, he heard her talking to Jesus. "Please, Lord, don't let the spikes hit my face," she prayed. As she ran past the guard the club missed her face but struck her body. The spikes caused deep cuts. As Hark passed through the door with her, the club swung right through him. He was glad to be an angel so he did not feel the pain! "Let me help you," Charity was saying to a young man. His wounds were even worse than hers. Many of the students were hurt. They moaned and cried and tried to help each other.

Hark sat sadly against the wall for a moment to record what was happening. He knew several of the students were Christians. One of them suggested that they pray.

"Help us to bear the pain, Jesus," one of them said. "Help us to know Your peace and joy."

"Jesus would forgive His enemies if He were here," said a young man.

"We should, too," said Charity.

"Oh God, forgive the soldier who beat us with the club," prayed the young man Charity was helping. "He doesn't know what he is doing."

"These men can't do anything to us that will keep us from following Jesus," said a bright-eyed girl. She was holding a rough bandage over her wounds from the spiked club.

"That's true," added another. "If we die we'll be with Him in heaven!"

Suddenly, the mood had changed. The crowded, dirty jail became a happy place. It was like the joy that had filled the stadium where the men had praised God as they died. Now, despite their wounds, the students were filled with joy and peace.

Hark couldn't stop adding his voice to the praises (even though no one could hear him).

"Oh yes! Oh yes!" he shouted. "Heaven is so glorious. There is light and joy! And the River of Life streams from the throne of God. And Jesus is there! He waits to welcome you! It is a place where there is no need for doctors because no one is ever sick or hurt. There are no graveyards because no one ever dies. There are no tears because Jesus has wiped them all away! It's -- it's . . ."

Hark had been flying quickly about the prison cell as he sang his praises. Suddenly, lost for words, he stopped. Just then, one of the students looked up with a joyful smile. He said he was sure he had just felt the touch of an angel's wings upon his face!

By now, news of the students' arrest had reached the rest of the city. Christians everywhere were praying for the young people. Parents began to wonder if they would ever see their children again. You can imagine how Festo and Mera were praying!

Then, to everyone's delight, God answered their requests. All the students were suddenly released!¹³

The Christians who had been in prison were so happy to be free. But they didn't know how long it would last.

"Instead of relaxing or going home, we should get to work. We must spend every minute telling other students about Jesus," they said to each other. "He helped us so much in prison. We must tell everyone how He helps those who come to Him!"

"Charity has brought us such great joy," Festo said when he heard what the students were doing for the Lord. "She loves Jesus so much."

Hark knew that sometimes it's hard for sons and daughters to get as excited about Jesus as their parents are.

"When trouble comes, though," Hark wrote in his report, "young people learn to trust God for themselves. That's good! They begin to pray. Before the trouble, they sometimes just let their parents do it! But when the boys and girls pray, they learn that Jesus answers their prayers, too."

Charity learned that lesson in prison. Festo and Mera were so thankful! They knew they would all need lots of prayers in the hard days ahead.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jill-briscoe/charity/>

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