

As most of you know, we were recently in NSW. First we were in Bondi, where we worshipped at the Anglican Church. We heard a young man, a life saver, tell of the efforts of life savers moved from closed beaches to help in the floods. His role was to deliver essentials to people in Wiseman's Ferry on the Hawkesbury.

We then headed north and flew into Ballina on the Richmond River, to a very potent smell resulting from the recent floods. We spent a few hours there before catching the Greyhound coach to Yamba on the Clarence River. Yamba wasn't flooded but was cut off for a week. Lots of stories were being recounted, some with very tragic outcomes. I want to talk about one with an almost miraculously happy ending.

Lisa Parkes, a former Ninja Warriors contestant, and a mother of three, was part of a team of hikers and professional rock climbers searching for survivors in the flood hit Northern Rivers region of New South Wales.

What many people don't know is that long before this, Lisa, now aged 44, was seriously injured in a car accident. At the age of 19 a drunk driver cased her car to crash into a pole. She was expected to be paralysed, but made an amazing recovery.

Back to the recent floods... Lisa was wrapping up a day of rescue efforts when she heard a baby crying, prompting her to rope herself to a tree and descend to the landslide at the property about 70km north of Lismore. She could see a baby lying on top of the mud and a house further down.

The child was about to roll over in an unconscious state after catching mud in its mouth when Lisa Parkes spotted it.

"I could see a baby lying on top of the mud, and about 30 metres or 50 metres away, the parents, the mum and dad, were buried almost neck-deep in the mud, and they had been there for more than 24 hours."

"The baby must have been ... about eight months, and it was impeccable timing, because it tried to roll over and had caught mud in its mouth and became unconscious," the obstacle racer added

She then pulled the baby from the mud and resuscitated it. "I had to clear its airways and resuscitate that baby in the middle of a landslide, while hanging from a rope, which I did," she said.



After an emergency team was called, Ms Parkes started digging out the parents, who had been stuck for around 24 hours, unable to move or reach their child.

“It must have been, for them, the most horrific thing ever, having their child in front of them but not being able to hold on to them,” she said.

The family was then taken to the Queensland Children’s Hospital in Brisbane, where they underwent treatment and have reportedly made a full recovery.

There was so much about this story that appealed to me. Of course, we all like a happy ending and this is the happiest of endings. It also made me think of my motto, Ephesians 2:10, the good works God has planned for us to do. Lisa Parkes and those with her went out that day not knowing who or what they would find. One family and all their loved ones will always be grateful that they did.

However, there is another level to this story. Neither the parents nor the baby was in a position to say to Lisa, ‘Thanks for calling by, but we really don’t need your help’. Without her help they were going to die.

I suspect that all of us at some point have wondered why we need a Saviour. We thought we were doing pretty well without one. However, once we realise we cannot save ourselves, in the spiritual sense of being brought into fellowship with God, then we are ready to turn to Christ saying,

‘Lord to whom can we go. You have the words of eternal life’. John 6:68



Lisa Parkes.
Photos: Channel 9

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