

A Family Lost and Alone

What is it like to be homeless? For those of us blessed with a shelter from the elements – a place of comfort, of rest and refreshment, a station of peace in a turbulent world – we may not comprehend the circumstances in which people without a permanent dwelling find themselves.

Judy Ann Eichstedt of Oklahoma was such a person. She writes about the experience in *The Upper Room*, a devotional booklet published by the United Methodist Church.

For many months, my six children and I were homeless and living in our rundown car. We got most of our food out of dumpsters and washed up in gas station bathrooms. Each day, we fought to survive. Family and friends turned away from us as if we had committed a crime.

Most people who saw us living in the car pretended they had not seen us. I felt invisible. Everything we owned had been sold in a garage sale as I tried to avoid being homeless. All that was left were some clothes, blankets, some dishes, and my Bible. At night, while the children slept, I cried, not knowing what to do. I prayed, telling God that I was ready to give up.

One night, I opened my Bible seeking strength and found this verse, Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (KJV). I stared at the words, then read them over and over again, seeing the meaning and the power behind them. This verse assured me that no matter what hardships we face, no matter what obstacles life throws at us, God, through Christ, has given us the strength to overcome them.

From time to time, we all face events that knock us down. They seem too powerful for us to conquer until we remember that we are in God’s hands at all times. With the help of God and some loving people God sent to us, my family escaped having to live in the car. I know now that we face nothing alone because through Christ, we fight no battle without God’s help.

How incredibly lost and alone Judy Ann and her family must have felt. Her story prompts these reactions for me, and perhaps for you as well:

1. Thanksgiving for the blessing of a home and the sanctuary that it is.
2. A new sensitivity to the needs of those who find themselves in situations similar to Judy Ann’s.
3. A new appreciation for the mission God has granted those of us in Life Care and Century Park to serve people who need our homes and the love and comfort to be found therein.

And it is, through Christ, that we provide the place of refuge in a troubling world.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble (Psalm 46:1 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter