

A Stormy Night

by Bill Aumack

Hey boys and girls, I want to tell you a story this morning. And this is a very, very old story. This story is even older than me. And I'm old, so this is an old, old story.

This is about a little girl whose name is Martha. Now, Martha and her dad worked at a lighthouse. Unfortunately, Martha's mom had died a year or two prior to this story, and she was no longer with them, but... Martha lived with her dad and she worked at a lighthouse. And you know what a lighthouse is? There are those big, tall buildings with a light at the top that you see along the coastline. And this is what they used to use in the days before satellites and the ships had GPS and all that kind of stuff. It's how ships knew where the land was at night, where rocks were and to stay away. And when they would look at the land, they'd see that lighthouse and they knew land was there and they knew that maybe the harbor was just a little bit to the left or a little bit to the right of that lighthouse. And they knew where to go because of that light at the night guiding them.

Well, one day they were there at the lighthouse and Martha's dad said, you know, "It's supposed to storm tonight. And so I'm going to go into town and get some supplies and I'll be back."

Now, the way that they got from their particular lighthouse into town was there was some cliffs and some rocks. And there was this thin line of rocks that went along out to a big huge rock where their lighthouse was. And you could walk across these rocks to land and into town and back and forth. But you could only do it at low tide. At low tide, the water was low enough and you could cross on the rocks. At high tide, the water covered the rocks and you couldn't cross. So when high tide came, you stayed on whatever side you were on until the next low tide.

And dad said, "It's low tide, it's just starting. It's going out, I'll cross over, I can do my shopping and I'll be back before high tide." And Martha wasn't too worried. She'd stayed at the lighthouse by herself a lot of times, no problem. And she watched her dad cross the rocks and get up on land and he waved and headed into town. And Martha thought she saw somebody hiding behind the rocks over there where dad was, but she wasn't sure. And so she went about doing her stuff and playing in the lighthouse and just waiting for her dad to come back. Then she realized it was getting kind of late and she didn't see her dad and it was getting late and later and later and the water was rising and she was beginning to worry about where her dad was.

Well, meanwhile, her dad had gone to town, had gone to the store, bought the things he needed, and was headed back when a bunch of men jumped him. And they tied him up, and they threw him in this old beat up shed. These men are what we call wreckers. And what they used to do is when ships would wreck, there'd be shipwrecks, they would scramble down the rocks, not to help anybody, but to steal from the sailors steal their stuff, rob them, and steal stuff off the ship that the ships were carrying. And so they were called wreckers because they liked the shipwrecks. And they knew it was going to be a stormy night. And if they could keep dad on land, Martha couldn't light the lights in the lighthouse by herself because she was too little. So they had a plan.

And now the wreckers sat behind the rocks anxiously waiting for the ships to wreck on that stormy night with no lighthouse. Dad was tied up in the shed. He couldn't do anything, but he began praying to God, "God, please help Martha. Please help her be able to light the lights."

Martha, meanwhile, was in the lighthouse waiting for dad, waiting for dad. And she saw the water getting higher and eventually cover over the rocks that he would walk across. And she knew that dad was not coming tonight. And she thought, oh no. Who is going to light the lighthouse? It's too tall. I can't reach it. She didn't know what to do and didn't know what to do. And she remembered that her mom told her that she should always pray when she

didn't know what to do. So she went and began to pray, "Dear God, help me know what to do. Help me to figure out how to light the lighthouse. What am I supposed to do, Lord?" And she remembered they had a little step ladder, a little two-step step ladder. So she went and got that and put that by the light, got the matches, climbed up on the step stool all the way to the top rung. And she was nowhere as close to reaching the light. It was still way too high. She's like, oh, no. She looked around. What can I do? What can I do? And then she saw a table, a little table. That's what I'll do. So she drug the table over by the light and she put the ladder up on the table and then she crawled up on the table and then she went up on the step stool and she tried to reach almost but she couldn't quite reach the wicks to light the candles for the light. She said if I had a stick or something, I could light the end of the stick, I could hold the stick in there and that would start it. But there weren't any sticks. She was in a lighthouse. She looked around and said, I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. I'm so close. What can I do? And then she saw it. Daddy had a big, thick family Bible he used to keep on the table there. It was a big, big Bible. She if I stood on top of that, I'd be able to reach. But you can't stand on the Bible. That's not good. I don't want to stand on the Bible. She goes, but maybe this one time it'll be OK. She carried the big heavy Bible over. She put it on the little table. She crawled up on the table. She put the Bible up on top of the step stool. She crawled up. She stepped upon the Bible. It was kind of scary and rickety. And she lit the match, and she could reach it. And she lit the candles inside for the thing. She was so happy. She was praying, thank you God, thank you Jesus for helping me be able to light the candles.

Her dad, meanwhile, was tied up in that little shed. There was a window in the shed and he could see out enough to know that the lighthouse lights weren't on. And then he saw them come on. And he was praying, thank you God, thank you God. And the wreckers saw the lights come on. They took off because they knew that there were gonna be no shipwrecks then. And the ships came in safely that night into the harbor, because they could see the light and were safe. The next morning, some villagers found Dad, untied him, and he and Martha were reunited. Everybody was OK, and it was good.

And Martha, she used the Bible to physically help her reach up, to reach higher. But sometimes the user's manual, that Bible, if you read it, it's got things in there that will help us reach up higher spiritually and to grow and grow. And I don't recommend you step on the Bible too much unless it's an absolute emergency like Martha had, but it will help you reach new heights. Okay? So remember to keep your Bible with you, to read it and to understand some of the stories that are in it and learn that it helps us reach higher up to Jesus, be more like him.

All right, thank you for listening. We'll see you guys next time.