

# Sunday 3rd August 2025 - Stories of Hope from Kenya

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Date: 03 August 2025

Preacher: Hazel Child

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you for this opportunity to speak. This is a story of a journey. It started for me in 2019 and for much of it has been leaps of faith.

! The first to send money, then to gather support from others, and then to finance wider projects and to trust that it was real. Trust that it was real.

When things happened, when things were stolen, people had accidents, or became ill, or when looting happened and flooding destroyed everything. And finally, I set out to meet the people that I'd only ever spoken to online, through Facebook, Facebook Messenger.

So I saw a post on Facebook that was asking for help. Beth was helping girls who'd been subjected to FGM, a practice that's illegal in Kenya, but it's still carried out by many communities in the name of tradition.

So I sent her some money, and I took an interest. I loved her passion for choices and for education. And she immediately spoke to me as if I was her friend.

[ 1 : 06 ] She cared about all the girls. She found two sisters who were being abused by their guardian and took them into her care. There's no authority, this woman. She just acts when she feels called by God.

One of them had cervical cancer, and she needed weeks and weeks of treatment, counselling, and care. Now, Beth was abused as a young woman, and she has limitless compassion for others, as well as an amazingly strong faith.

So this is a picture of her. She would go round to schools and teach girls about reproductive health and family planning, and she made sanitary pads to give out, and she would give out underwear, and encouraging girls to stay at school, which is actually very hard when tradition says that you should leave school after primary school and get married and have babies in your early, mid-teens. So we were distributing food. That really happened because of COVID. The Kenyan government shut down the country and told everyone to stay at home, but they didn't offer any assistance at all. No money, no food, nothing. They just said, stay at home. So I started a fundraiser, and my friends were amazing, responding with speed and enthusiasm. And slowly we started a sponsorship programme.

[ 2 : 26 ] And people were glad to have photos of a child and support them through school, and some sponsors would buy their families chickens. And that's Gladwell.

She was one of our first sponsor children, and her sponsor bought us some chickens. It was just life-changing for the family because, of course, chickens have eggs, and they have more chickens, and it's a path to self-sufficiency.

Some bought a goat or a sheep, and Christmas was joyous as Beth would give out the things that sponsors asked her to buy, and many of us joined in. Many other people joined in, buying socks or extra food and little luxuries that make that season special.

The daily goat programme was really... That was life-changing, because a cup of milk will... It's a really strong food for small children, and if a mother can't feed her baby, goat's milk will keep her baby alive.

I have so many stories and pictures from the last five years. I mean, looking through all the photos and trying to decide what to condense into 20 minutes was just phenomenally hard. So I'm going to focus on recent times.

[ 3 : 37 ] Last year there was a flood, and the flood was devastating. Many people injured, missing. We had children who were just there that no one knew who they belonged to.

So those children there are children that Beth put out on Facebook saying, does anyone know any of these children? Does anyone know an auntie or a grandparent because the parents were missing?

Many simply disappeared. Some survived and were left with nothing. Many children lost siblings, or they were left without parents. Beth searched for a wider family and found foster homes for children who gathered around her, because she's known for never turning people away.

This is Joshua. He was given a house and a farm and some children to look after. He'd never met them before. Now those children, there's five siblings there, and there's two others from the wider family who are somewhere else, but those children are orphaned now.

Their father had died before, and then during the flood, the mother was in the valley with the little girl at the front there. She was only 18 months old, and the flood water came really, really fast, and she threw that child up the bank before she was swept away.

[ 4 : 51 ] And she wasn't found until three days later. And that little girl is now sponsored by someone in our congregation. Oh, not that little girl, sorry. I should look at my notes, shouldn't I?

Those children are sponsored by people that I know. So children come to Beth's house. She has eight or nine unrelated people living in her house at any time.

It's a three-bed bungalow. She said, oh, the children come on Saturdays, and our library helps them very much. I said, what library? She said, the books you brought. So the books that people donated, and the few books I bought when I was out there, is now the library for the local community.

So people come and they read this book here. This little girl just sat down, and she's telling stories about what was in there. She's far too little to be able to read Swahili even, never mind the English that's in that book.

But she's pointing at the pictures, and she's telling stories about it. We drove around the Great Viff Valley to visit communities where the sponsored children live.

[ 5 : 59 ] The Maasai live traditionally. They herd cattle, and they use the milk and make things, and some of you will have seen the leather work that I've brought back to sell, tanning and so forth.

So we have three of our sponsored children living with this community, and I've just taken that picture of those two little children because they're really cute, and they're holding one of the toys that was given by this church. But you can see the football there.

They took a load of footballs out that the children were so pleased with. They wanted to share some of their singing and music with you, so this might work.

It does. So I stopped to move, and they kept going.

This went on for quite a long time. He's playing with something he was given.

[ 7 : 33 ] Choice, choice. It was absolutely stunning country.

And you'll notice, or you may have noticed, that they weren't sure what they wanted to sing, but they wanted to sing something. And they were a bit self-conscious about starting, but they did it anyway because they wanted to share something with us.

So, you know, whenever you feel self-conscious about having to sing or move or be seen, even people with that level of confidence about what they do still had to think for a minute and still felt a bit self-conscious because they weren't quite sure what they wanted us to hear.

Do you see that in that picture there? Can you see a little hut in the far distance? That's the toilet for the whole community, and it's full.

So one of my next projects will be to try and get a new toilet for this community. And toilets are life-changing. This is a pit latrine. So someone digs a hole in the ground, a really deep hole in the ground, and then you lay a floor, and then you put up walls, and you put on a roof, and you hang a door, and everyone gets involved with the painting.

[ 8 : 52 ] And it's so incredible. It's so life-changing. We have made many toilets over the last five years, different communities where toilets either aren't there or they're inadequate because cholera follows on.

If you haven't got a toilet, people get cholera because people go into the bushes and it fails the water supply, and people need toilets. People need toilets and hand-washing facilities.

I'm going on to talk about Gerald. Now, when Josephine gave birth to Gerald and they realized he had spina bifida, she was expected to just leave him in the forest.

That's what you're expected to do because to not do that is shameful. So she refused, and she kept her boy, and so her husband divorced her, and her family disowned her, and even now, she has to choose her moments to go and collect water because some people in the community will still verbally abuse her because she's done this shameful thing and kept a disabled child.

You know, her life is incredibly hard. So we found her, we found him a sponsor. That's what he, that's him, the top left-hand corner is him in 2020, and we found him a sponsor, and his sponsor in 2022 raised the money for a new wheelchair, which was fabulous.

[10:12] I mean, how kind of her, and they were so excited, and you see, he's so pleased, he's so glad to get that new wheelchair, but it couldn't cope with rural Kenyan roads because it's a rough terrain, and the wheels have fallen off, and it was lovely and shiny, but it really, it couldn't cope with the environment, so we're really hoping that we can fundraise for a new wheelchair for Gerald, which might be in the pipeline.

But Josephine really is a heroine. Those two little girls, they're her sister's children, and one day, her sister left them with her and went somewhere and just never came back.

She just never came back. So now she has two little girls to look after, as well as Gerald, and Gerald could go to school, but he can't because his wheelchair isn't manoeuvrable enough in school, so they won't let him go in.

So once he's got a wheelchair, he can go back to school. He's bright, he's interested, he wants to work, he wants to be able to think, and he was interested enough to start playing the tin whistle I brought him.

But by and large, this is a boy who's depressed, and you can understand why. This is the community. It takes real faith and courage to plant seeds when you don't have food security.

[11:29] Last year, the crops were planted, and the floods washed them away. And this year, the community has come together again to plant. We raise the money for the seeds, and they're out there and they're planting.

Can you imagine how back-breaking that is to plant a whole seed by, to plant a whole field by hand. You've got your bucket of seeds tied around your waist, and you've got, you're planting the seeds and walking backwards and covering the earth, covering with the earth as you go.

And that's, oh, my back aches just thinking about it. And then, once that's done, you can't just leave it. Someone always has to be there to make sure that animals don't come and eat it, that bugs and pests are picked off it, and to stop the weeds from choking it all.

Beth cooks, for those who are really struggling. This is a thick, nourishing porridge that will sustain people. Sorghum, maize, millet and soya are in water and boiled, and when it's the right consistency, she pours it into those drums.

They're about five-litre drums, and that will keep a family alive. It's the sort of thing that's a nice breakfast, but will also keep you alive.

[12:44] A cup a day is enough. This family, one of the families that she helps, they're very nearby. The mother had a bit of an emotional breakdown.

She was just really struggling because she couldn't, she couldn't feed her family, and it was deeply frustrating for her, and when we went to see them, they were sitting by the light of a candle, and as I saw them, I thought, there's things I can do, I can do things here, I'll get them a light, I'll get them, I'll sort out some, but I didn't say any of that, and she, shortly after my visit, she went off trying to find work to support her family, and we don't entirely know what happened, but she stole some food from a shop, she stole some maize flour, and some cooking oil, and for that, she was imprisoned, and we couldn't find her, and she was in prison for a month, and then was fined, so we had to try and, we had to pay a fine to get her out of about 250 pounds, so her children were absolutely desperate, because they thought she had abandoned them, but she hadn't, she was in a police station, and no one will help you to try and get the information out there, so it was just sheer luck that someone knew someone who told Beth so she could go and find her.

Most of these children have sponsors now, including the little girl at the front who has a sponsor in our congregation. She would like, the mother would like to have a start-up to, in the same way that somebody donated money for Josephine to have a fruit and vegetable stall, this mother would like to be able to set up a second-hand clothes stall, so if I get together the money for her to start that, then she'll be able to do things that will sustain her.

People want to work, we want sustainability, we're not looking to simply fund communities forevermore, people just need a bit of a leg up, they need a bit of a beginning.

But when crisis hits, Beth tries to bridge the gaps, she has no authority, and she gets no help except for those who are moved to answer her call.

[15:01] She has a gift for inspiring people to come together for the common good, and she draws strength from her faith. She has a network of good women who give and do what they can, so she tries never to send anyone away empty.

We give out packets of flour and oil for people to take away and cook at home, but she will also cook in her outdoor kitchen to give bowls and plates out to people who don't have that facility. And the school, USA, you may have heard that USA was suddenly and dramatically stopped, and there was a whole program by which schools in Kenya were getting lunch.

So the seeds and the flour and the beans would arrive, and the teachers would cook the food for the children at lunchtime, and that just stopped dead overnight. So in an attempt to bridge the gap, we were feeding children in the schools just for those three or four weeks.

Because when you're living at that level of subsistence, you can't just suddenly find more money from somewhere. Most people are working for three dollars a day. Here is another amazing woman.

[16:06] This is Gladys. Gladys de Kille. You'll notice that she's wearing glasses. And she's wearing glasses because I was able to take out glasses that were donated from the congregation and give them to people.

And just the joy of being able to see properly, you can't imagine. So I was so pleased to do something for her because she is amazing. She's been looking after Gladwell for years, ever since Gladwell's mother died.

And Gladwell is the one you saw with the chickens at the beginning. She was one of our first sponsored children. But recently, her cousin Patience has come to live with Grandma because her mother gave her a marriage to a much older man.

And Patience ran away. She ran home to Grandma. And Grandma is determined that patients at the age of 12 will not have to get married and have babies. She will go back to school.

And so we need a sponsor for her so that she can go back to school in September and have a childhood, have a life, have an education, have a future. She's also got another one of her grandchildren with her who was also in an abusive marriage and she's home to live with Grandma.

[17:18] So it just shows that it's not just the older generation that cling to tradition. You know, often people will say, oh, it's tradition. Older people can't be expected to understand.

Well, no. There are a lot of older women who absolutely are powerful in their rejection of false marriage and their belief in choice and their belief in education that they were denied.

That's how they grew up. That's how they lived. And they don't feel the need to push that onto the next generation. They want something different for their granddaughters. This, this lovely little family we rescued some years ago.

You wouldn't believe they're the same children, would you? The same young people. So these four here were found in that house behind them in really, really horrible circumstances that I can't go into now because I'm running out of time.

But the generosity of friends built this house and these are the same young people. Now they've got a house to live in and they're so happy. Okay, this is a house for children to stay in until new homes are found.

[18:24] So some people come and they stay for years and some people just come for a little while until somewhere else can be found for them and they can move on. Especially when girls have escaped from really difficult circumstances.

And sometimes, one of the things that Beth does is she goes to the parents and says, your daughter has run away. Can we please talk about how she can possibly come home and go back to school?

And sometimes, she manages to bridge those gaps and that is Beth's incredible strength and skill that she doesn't just do her own thing because she thinks she knows what. She will go to huge lengths to try and bridge gaps and make sure that people can move forward together and not just move away.

all this is about cohesion and community and people working together and people finding the strength in that. These are the houses that love built.

So there's your Ruth house. There's Ruth house that we built some years ago. This house has been built since I went out to Kenya.

[ 19 : 30 ] I went out there and Stephen and his sister were living in this little house here which was just horrible. It was dank and it was muddy and the children are living there on their own because the parents are dead and they lost their siblings in the flooding and there's only Stephen and his sister back left.

She's called Wambui. Yeah, I thought, oh that's a lovely name, it's a Swahili name. Oh yes, I shall call her Wambui. Wambui means pest. It literally means unwanted daughter.

So when she's baptised later because they don't do infant baptism, they're baptised in church later on in early teens, she'll choose a name for herself.

But for the moment she is Wambui. And they live together in this little hut where Stephen does his best but he's a 15 year old boy. There was a neighbour that helped out but Stephen, he does so well.

He gets himself to school, he learns, he's got a sponsor and he came home from school and he's all smart in his school uniform and he comes back to this desperate, miserable, muddy, wet hut where the rain's coming in through the roof and his blankets are wet.

[ 20 : 46 ] And that was the one time I felt absolutely helpless and overwhelmed and I could think what am I going to do? What can I do? I am completely overwhelmed at this point.

I cannot fix this house. Well, that was the one time I really sat and cried. Not there in front of him. Beth will, she says, no, now we do something to help.

So she got on and she prepared a meal and then left the children to eat it. But she just gets on and she does things. She never sits down and throws her apron over her head.

She just cracks on and does something when I was just standing there thinking I didn't know what to do. This is out of my comfort zone. And the following day I just sat and really cried. But I got in touch with my friend who is Stephen's sponsor and she said, let's build him a house.

So this miserable hut was taken down and a new house was built on their little bit of land. And the little bit of land is terribly, terribly important.

[ 21 : 50 ] That belonged to their grandfather. It's been given to them. Because I did think, well, why not just, you know, let them go and live with someone else. But they have to hold on to that bit of land because that is the bit of land that his house can be on because it's what belongs to them.

So this is the great thing about this charity. If you give money to this charity, you see the effects of it almost immediately. So I went out to Kenya at the end of May and I came home and I spoke to my friend.

And by the middle of June, there was a new house up. This is the center. You can see there I've got two open suitcases. Here is one of my suitcases that's full of things.

Anyone give paracetamol? I took all that paracetamol. They were so pleased. We gave that out across to all the different families and they were so pleased because in Kenya, you can't buy a 39p packet of cheap generic paracetamol.

If you go to a kennist, it's Panadol and it costs the equivalent of four pounds a box and people just can't prioritize it. So it becomes a luxury. Anyone recognize the little snow white dolly that that little girl is holding and the puzzles that the boy is playing with?

[ 23 : 04 ] That kitten. That kitten is sleeping in front of you. That's the brazier to do the cooking on. And after the cooking is finished, the brazier gets dragged into the living room and it's the warmth of the evening.

It's quite cold, you know, near Nairobi. But there are some of the women who live in, the girls, in their late teens and they live in Beth's house and they're cooking and washing up.

The center is a place of learning refuge and stability. This is where people learn sewing, knitting. It's a way of becoming self-sufficient. And while I was there, that young woman and her children arrived because they'd been thrown out of where they lived and they arrived with nothing and Beth took them in.

And a boy with HIV turned up later on, an unaccompanied nine-year-old who'd also left an abusive situation. And Beth, they take them in. They're given a meal, they're given a bed for the night and then Beth sorts things out.

And I said she has no authority. She took them to the police station to report the crime of the husband throwing her out and beating her. And the police take the details and then they say to Beth, you look after her.

[ 24 : 14 ] They don't give you any money to do that. They don't give you any authority to do that. They just say, you look after her. So she takes her home again. And here are some of the people at the center.

The children have drawn you pictures. Most of those pictures say something like church and it's the building because I've told them I'm speaking at church today. That's Morris, the only boy who comes to learn sewing.

He is passionate. He really, really wants to be a designer and he is, he is, he looked at my bum bag and said, I can make you one of those and immediately started finding scrap materials to put together a bum bag that I could bring home and sell to other people.

And Nasirian at the top there is wearing new glasses that we were able to pay for for her to have a proper sight test so that she can see properly. Now, I'm going to teach you a song.

Swahili. Nasama, asante means I say thank you. Nasama, asante. Can you say, Nasama, asante. So asante is thank you.

[ 25 : 23 ] Okay? So if someone gives you something in Kenya and you might say asante, yeah? Asante sana. Thank you very much. So, Nasama, asante. Nasama.

asante. Perfect. Ewe. Ewe. Mungu. Mungu. Wangu. Wangu. Absolutely. So, I'm going to teach you that bit first.

It goes like this. Nasama, Nasama, asante. Nasama, asante.

Nasama, asante. Nasama, asante. Ewe. Mungu. Wangu.

Oh, you're amazing. Let's sing that again. Nasama, asante. Nasama, asante. Nasama, asante.

[ 26 : 26 ] Ewe. Mungu. Wangu. Oh, amazing. So, later on, you will get twasima, asante, which is, we say thank you.

Can you say twasima? Okay, twasima, asante, we say thank you. Now, here's your verse. Now, some of you may be familiar with the word hakuna.

Okay, because hakuna matata means no worries, yeah? But hakuna mungu means no god. Okay? There is no god like you. Hakuna mungu karma wewe.

Okay, so, hakuna mungu karma wewe. Excellent. Hakuna mungu karma wewe.

Excellent. And then we're back to our ewe mungu wangu. Okay, so we've got Hakuna mungu karma wewe.

[ 27 : 26 ] Sing it. Hakuna mungu karma wewe. Brilliant. Hakuna mungu karma wewe. Hakuna mungu karma wewe.

Oh, okay, we're going to go from the beginning because you've got this. Hakuna mungu kamu wewe. Hakuna mungu kamu wewe.

Hakuna mungu kamu wewe. Ewe mungu wangu. Okay, so we're now going to go back. In a minute, you get an English verse.

Oops, no, that's, oh, I see, somebody's, yeah, okay. So we're going to go from the beginning and we're going to go straight through. There's an English verse that you will, you can read straight off the screen, okay?

So we're going to sing. Can we do that verse again?

[ 28 : 43 ] Hakuna mungu kamu wewe. Hakuna mungu kamu wewe. Hakuna mungu kamu wewe. Ewe mungu wangu.

Asena asante. Asena asante. Asena asante. Asena asante. Ewe mungu wangu.

You can stand off if you like. Asena asante. Asena asante. Asena asante.

Ewe mungu wangu. Stand off if you like. Are we going to sing. Are we going to sing the English verse. Do you want to stand up? You ready? You are the Alpha and Omega.

You are the Alpha and Omega. You are the Alpha and Omega. Ewe mungu wangu nasema asante.

[ 29 : 47 ] Nasema asante. Nasema asante. Ewe mungu wangu.

Twasema asante. Twasema asante. Twasema asante. Ewe mungu wangu.

And again. Twasema asante. Twasema asante. Twasema asante.

Ewe mungu wangu. Well done everybody. Fabulous. Thank you. Thanks.

Take a seat. And the reason, the reason I wanted to teach you that song, the reason I learnt that song, was because when we were driving around the Great Rift Valley, it was amazing.

[ 30 : 45 ] It was amazing. I can't show you photos of the Great Rift Valley because it just can't be captured in photos. And when we were driving there, it was just lovely and beautiful and everything was fine. And driving back, there was a massive traffic jam.

And our driver really, really wanted to go off the road and drive along the edge. And did I tell you the Great Rift Valley was right there? And I was hanging on. I was hanging on in the back of the car thinking, I'm going to die.

I'm going to die. I'm going to die. And so I said, please, please, please, could we just go back on the road and just wait for the traffic to go out here? Please. And so everyone was, you know, there was tensions rising. So I said, what's your favourite hymn?

Teach me a hymn. And this is what they taught me. Oh, thank you. So we sang that a lot. And then we sang it a lot after anything that was depressing happened.

So we were just feeling really down and miserable as we'd be coming back. We were coming back from Stephen's house and I felt, and we just, and we started to sing. Because that is Beth's default position. She praises God.

[ 31 : 42 ] When I say to her, yeah, when I say to her, Beth, I'm not sure I can keep this going. I'm not sure I can necessarily do this next month or next year. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. She says, don't worry, Hazel.

Don't worry. God's time is best. And when I say, oh, I can't do that right now. She says, don't worry. God's time is best. She never hassles. She never gives me a hard time. She treats me like I'm, she treats me as her friend.

She is my friend. And she knows that it's in God's hands. And all things will work together. And all things will work together for good.

Who knows? He loves God. And when I looked at, when I was thinking about giving this talk, I looked at Beth's Facebook. Well, I didn't deliberately look at Beth's Facebook page.

It just comes up in your feed, doesn't it? And this is, oh, I'm in control. Oh, this is projects. Okay. I'm doing this bit first.

[ 32 : 42 ] How can we help projects building towards specific short term goals? Toilet blocks and hand washing stations. Equipment for the center. They need another sewing machine. They desperately need an overlocker because that's how you finish off things properly.

And the one they had got stolen. Security. Big padlocks always help. The feeding programs. When we feed the people who, well, there's the people who need feeding because Beth never turns anyone away.

Livestock, chickens and pens, sheep for a family, goats for the community. These are things that are bigger projects. They're specific short term goals. They don't go on forever. And education.

Projects. This is other more long term ways. So prayer is vital caring for the work. And encouragement and inspiration both ways. Beth often prays for me and I appreciate it.

And the sponsorship is the personal involvement. The letters and the photos, the regular updates and the long term relationships that can be formed. And general contributions. You know, any amount, any amount is wonderful.

[ 33 : 50 ] There was, I remember, I remember in COVID times, I was delivering meals to people with church and this lovely elderly man came, wait there, wait there.

And he went out and he came back and he gave me a little bit of money and said, that's for your work in Kenya. And it all matters. It all matters. Any size, always welcome.

And you'll see the immediate impact. So I want to leave you with Beth's thought because this is what I saw on her page that morning. Praise God this morning. Let us praise God always.

She knows us by our names and also our needs. Rejoice in the Lord always. I say again, rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God. Amen.