

Giardia / An African Martyr

Jay: The children laughed and splashed as they played in the water of the rice field. Their mothers were busy planting the rice in neat rows. When it got too hot, they all stopped to eat some lunch, and they drank the water that was running through the field. Gita had such fun!

Tammy: Hello once again, and thank you for joining me and Carol on Women of Hope.

Carol: It's good to be with you again. You know I'm thinking about those children in the rice field and I don't feel good about this at all.

Tammy: Me either. I thought 'Oh no!' because I know that's how we pick up some diseases.

Carol: I thought the same thing, Tammy. Now I need to know what happens next. Let's listen as Jay tells us the rest of the story.

Jay: Gita and his friends didn't know that lots of *giardia* were in that water. It was contaminated by people and animals that had used their bowels upstream. Giardia are very tiny creatures that look like jelly and have tails so they can swim in water. We can't see them without using a microscope. They might be tiny, but if we swallow enough of them, they can make us very sick.

Within two weeks after they had finished planting the rice field, everyone had diarrhea and stomach cramps. Gita used his bowels in the water of the rice field, and he noticed that his poo was greenish and floated on the top of the water! That was strange! Gita and his friends also had a lot of gas. They laughed at each other, but not too much because they all felt sick in their stomachs and didn't want to eat or drink, so their bodies became dry. Some of the mothers had the same problems. Some of them didn't feel anything. They still had giardia in their stomachs and intestines, though... just not enough to make them sick.

Gita's mother took him to the health clinic to get some medicine for him. The doctor asked about what he'd been drinking, and Gita told her about the day they played in the rice field water, and drank some of that water when they got hot. "Was that about 2 or 3 weeks ago?" she asked him. Yes, it had been 2 weeks ago.

"Well," she said to Gita and his mother. "You have probably swallowed some giardia in the water. They are not usually dangerous, but they can make you feel sick and you don't feel like drinking. Then your body becomes dehydrated – that means it's too dry, and *that* is dangerous! Your body is dehydrated, Gita, so I'll give you some special medicine to kill the giardia in your stomach. You must take this medicine every morning when you get up, and every evening before you go to bed for 10 days, OK? Will you do that for me?"

"Yes, Ma'am," replied Gita, as he swallowed the first dose of the medicine. The doctor asked his mother if she was pregnant. She was, so the doctor said, "I cannot give you this medicine because of

the baby. But you are not very sick with the giardia, and they will go out of you again in about 6 weeks. So just make sure that you drink lots of *clean* water. Clean water that's been boiled hard for at least one minute to kill anything in it that's alive. Don't drink any more of that contaminated water in the rice field, or from the river! And be sure to always use a latrine or toilet. Don't use the rice field..... you don't want to spread your giardia to other people again! And also be sure to always carefully wash your hands with soap so no *more* giardia get into your stomach ever again."

Gita's mother was a bit confused by all the things she had to remember, so the doctor asked her and Gita both to repeat those three things with her. She held up one finger and said, "Only drink clean water that could not have any giardia in it." They repeated that, then she held up a second finger and said, "Always use the toilet or latrine to use your bowels. Never poo near the river or the rice field water." They repeated that, and then she held up a third finger and said, "And always wash your hands with soap."

She reminded Gita's mother that he had to take his medicine every morning and every night until it was all gone, and he had to drink lots of clean water so his body didn't get too dry.

"Thank you so much, Doctor!" said Gita's mother. "We *will* do those things. We don't want to become sick like this again! And I'll tell my friends all that you've explained to us. Thank you!"

At home, Gita and his mother drank lots of clean water, Gita took the medicine every morning and night, and they soon felt well again. Some of their friends were very ill and took a long time to get better. Some had to take different medicine. Gita's friend was so dehydrated she had to have fluid put straight into her veins for a day or two to add water quickly to her body. But in the end, they all recovered. Now all of them knew that they should never drink the rice field water, or the river water! They knew to always use a toilet or latrine, and also to wash their hands carefully with soap afterwards. Then they would not get sick again because of swallowing giardia.

Tammy: Jay, thank you for being here. Giardia sounds like a nasty illness so thanks for that story.

Jay: I've had it - it's very uncomfortable - all that gas in the bowels, and cramps, and vomiting and diarrhea. You can't always tell what little creature is causing symptoms like these - we generally just call it 'gastro', short for gastroenteritis, which means having an inflamed stomach and gut. Some kinds of gastro are much more serious than the giardia that Gita had. If a person's body is getting too dry, they will pass only a little dark urine, their eyes look sunken in, their mouth is dry, and the skin doesn't smooth out quickly when you pinch it. If this happens, or if there's blood in the bowel actions, you should go to the health clinic right away.

Tammy: It's especially dangerous for a baby to get dehydrated. If you can't get a sick baby to drink properly, take him to the doctor or the hospital straight away.

Jay: If someone has got bad diarrhea, they need more than water. Add a spoonful of sugar and a good pinch each of salt and baking soda to a cup full of boiled water. You can add some orange or lemon juice if you have it. Get them to sip it slowly, and keep this up till they can eat and drink ok.

Tammy: Did you get that? A spoonful of sugar, a pinch of salt and a pinch of baking soda in a cup of boiled water that has cooled. You can flavour that with orange or lemon juice, but be sure that you have the base. Here it is again: a spoonful of sugar, a pinch of salt and a pinch of baking soda in a cup of boiled water that has cooled.

Carol: People can get intestinal and stomach illnesses anywhere, but it's most common where the water is not clean, and people don't use proper toilets or wash their hands properly. Today most children learn in school that they need to wash their hands. We talked about the rules for hand washing . . . do *you* remember?

Tammy: I do - we should wash our hands with clean water and soap... rubbing for about 20 seconds... cleaning the front, the back and the fingernails.

Carol: And when we should wash our hands? - before, during and after we prepare food... before we eat... and after using the toilet or changing a baby's nappy.

Tammy: And after being with sick people or handling animals. So let's go over other ways we can stop giardia and all those other bacteria, viruses and parasites that cause intestinal and stomach illnesses. Probably the most important thing is to use clean water.

Carol: And that is so important and a good place to start because we use water for so many things. If your water looks cloudy, filter it first. You could pour it through some clean cloth to get rid of dirt. Water can *look* clean, but still have dangerous tiny creatures in it. Unless you *know* that your water supply is safe, you should boil your water hard for at least one minute, or treat it with medicine before you make any drinks with it. If you live in the high mountains, boil it for two or three minutes. Be especially careful to use *boiled* and cooled water to mix babies' drinks. If you're travelling away from home, and you don't know how good the water is, be safe - just drink bottled water or drinks that have been boiled, like tea. You could take clean water with you as well.

Tammy: Remember - *any* water that goes in your mouth must be clean. That means the water you use to brush your teeth, the water you use to wash your fruit and vegetables, and the water in ice.

Carol: Tammy that is a great reminder. Many people forget about those simple but important times that we use water, like brushing our teeth or washing our food. Now, what about preparing food? Bacteria grow quickly in raw meat or chicken so we need to cook them or chill them, as soon as possible. We should not handle raw and cooked foods with the same kitchen tools, such as tongs, knives, or cutting boards, unless they've been thoroughly washed between uses.

Tammy: If you eat meat, it's best to keep one cutting board for meat, one for chicken, and another one for vegetables, so they don't contaminate each other. Make sure meat is cooked right through. If you're eating raw fruit and vegetables, it's best to peel them or soak them in special medicine.

OK, so the main ways to stop gastro spreading are: clean water, clean hands,

Carol: ... clean food preparation...

Tammy: and don't forget to use a toilet or latrine, not the fields or the street. That way you won't spread your diseases to other people, or catch their diseases.

Tammy: Welcome back to Women of Hope. Carol just showed me a picture of a very big old church, Westminster Abbey in London. It's made of stone, with high arches and lots of statues and stained glass windows.

Carol: Have you ever seen pictures of Westminster Abbey? It is a very famous church building in England. For hundreds of years, most of the kings and queens of Britain have been crowned and married there. Westminster Abbey was built more than 1,000 years ago. When they built the western towers in the 15th century they left ten spaces for statues, but they never put anything in their place.

In 1995 the western towers were being repaired. The church leaders decided that they should fill the spaces with the statues of ten Christian martyrs of the twentieth century. A martyr is a person who was killed because they stuck to their faith in Jesus Christ. These ten people are meant to represent all of those who have suffered, been persecuted and oppressed...and died for the way they held onto their faith in Jesus. The ten martyrs came from every continent and several Christian groups. More people were martyred in the 20th century than any other time in the history of the church.

Three of these ten martyrs were women. One was Manche Masemola from South Africa.

Tammy: Manche Masemola was born about 1913, in Marishane (Ma-re-sha-nay) in Transvaal, South Africa. She grew up with her parents, two older brothers, a younger sister, Mabule, (Ma-boo-lay) and a cousin, Lucia. The family belonged to the Pedi tribe.

Carol: Manche did not go to school, but worked hard with her family at home and on the barren land. Many years before, missionaries had settled in the Transvaal, and in the early 1900s there were a few Pedi people who followed Jesus. The rest of the tribe, worshipped spirits like their ancestors, and they were very suspicious of the Christians because they were different.

Tammy: In 1919 an Anglican missionary, Father Augustine Moeka (Moo-ay-ka) came to Marishane, where the tribal chief allowed missionaries to live and work. One day, Manche and her cousin Lucia heard Father Moeka preach about the one God who made heaven and earth. She was so interested she wanted to hear more, and she began to attend Bible classes twice a week. She came to understand that Jesus was the Son of God and he had died so that she could be right with God. She loved Jesus very much.

Carol: As you can imagine Manche's parents were not pleased. Remember they were very superstitious people. They said she must not attend classes or to go to church. They were afraid that she would leave them and she would not work on the land any more. They thought she might refuse to marry the man they chose for her, so her parents tried to discourage her. But she couldn't keep away from church; she wanted to learn so much. She continued to go to church so she was beaten. Several times Manche Masemola told her cousin Lucia and Father Moeka that she would die rather than give up her faith. Once she said, "I shall be baptised with my own blood." Those words came true in a way.

Tammy: When Manche persistently refused to give up her faith, her parents locked her in their home and hid her clothes so she couldn't go to the church. They were afraid of this new faith, because they did not understand it. Finally, her mother and father took her away to a lonely place and killed her. She was only 15 or 16 years old. They buried her body near a huge granite rock on a remote hillside. A few days later her younger sister, Mabule, became ill and died at the nearby mission hospital. Mabule was buried beside her sister. In remembrance, their father planted trees beside their graves.

Carol: Seven years later a little group of Christians made a pilgrimage to the grave. Since then, thousands of pilgrims visit the graves every year. Many Christians in South Africa love the memory of this simple African teenage girl. People will remember how brave Manche was, as they look at her statue above the great west door of Westminster Abbey in London. Her statue represents the many thousands of Christian martyrs of the 1900s.

Tammy: Why do you think they remember Manche? She didn't achieve anything that you can see – no! ...But she inspires people still, because she was so brave, and so determined to follow her Master, Jesus Christ. She was a loyal daughter who continued to work for her parents, but she had a stronger loyalty. She just could not say that she rejected Jesus, when he had given his life for her.

Carol: When a person decides to follow Jesus as their Master and Savior, they start a relationship with him. It's based on Jesus' love for them. This is so real, so precious to believers that many thousands have been willing to die for their faith rather than turn away from it. Real Christianity is not a list of rules, it's not about being *religious*, but it's first of all a relationship with Jesus Christ. A relationship of love and thankfulness that's stronger even than a relationship with a mother or father.

Tammy: This simple, uneducated peasant girl was so grateful for what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for her, that she made the difficult choice to obey him rather than her parents. Manche paid the price with her life. Her sacrifice has given strength and inspiration to thousands of Christians, just as other martyrs have down through the centuries – from the first followers of Jesus right up to this day. The story does not end there because later her own mother became a believer in Jesus.

Carol: People like Manche always make me think about whether I would be willing to suffer for the sake of Jesus.

Tammy: Oh, I think that way as well.

Carol: Sometimes when I feel I'm having a hard time because I follow Jesus, it does me good to remember a person like Manche.

Tammy: I agree. It helps us to be stronger and even feel happy that God allows us to suffer for his sake. It's worth it! I'd like to read something from God's word, the Bible. It was written by Paul, an early leader of the Christians.

Carol: Oh Tammy, that's a great choice. Paul certainly suffered for his faith in Jesus - he was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked and in the end he was killed.

Tammy: He wrote to some Christians: 'If we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory. I'm sure that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.' (Rom 8:17-18 based on TEV) Like the martyrs we've talked about, Paul trusted and hoped in God, and he knew that after his death he would enter into a glorious life with God forever.

Carol: Here's something to think about. If so many women and men have been willing to die for their faith, surely it must be worth thinking about very seriously. Have you ever really found out who Jesus was, and what he has done for you? If you have a Bible, you can read about him there. Maybe you could talk with someone you know who follows Jesus, or visit a church where they teach the Bible. Or you could write to us and we will do our very best to help you.

Tammy: Yes, we always love to hear from you. I hope you remember how to avoid getting giardia... but more than that, I hope you understand how much God loves you, and I pray that you will have a strong relationship with Jesus Christ. That will give you great hope!

Carol: Goodbye my friend, and may God bless you and your family today.

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