



SAVING A DROWNING BEAR (Children's Story)

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**There is a PowerPoint presentation that goes along with this story you can download from the main page.

Bible Text: For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13-14, NIV).

Good morning, boys and girls. How many of you have seen a live bear? Bears look so friendly and cuddly. That's why everyone loves a soft Teddy Bear. But in the wild bears can be VERY dangerous! Real bears have two things you have to watch out for: CLAWS and JAWS!

Bears have one other thing that you have to watch out for: their stomachs. Their stomach is like a G.P.S., guiding them to snacks. Bears most often come into contact with people because their stomachs are talking to them. Maybe your stomach has talked to you. Like you, bears absolutely love human food!

Bears go crazy for things like French fries and apple pies! Garbage cans filled with leftovers are a dream come true for a bear.

Table scraps are like a bear's buffet! Candy is dandy. Pizza is powerful. Fruit is fabulous. Watermelon is wonderful. Sandwiches are supreme! Bears are constantly searching for whatever may be sweet or delicious.

Bears have a great sense of smell. Have you seen a bear stand on its back two legs — they are trying to get their nose up high to see and smell the air. "Are those pancakes I smell?" a bear asks himself. "Are those potato chips I smell?"

Some bears will do some crazy things to get food. Do you remember the two dangers of bears? Yes: jaws and claws. Their big powerful paws will even punch a hole in a car window to grab a candy bar! Many stories tell of how bears will open a car door like a tin can, ripping the metal, to get to some snack cakes or sandwiches.

This is why some bears like to wander into neighborhoods. Their nose tells them: "Where there are people, there is good food."

In this true story, a 400-pound (181 kg) black bear was following his nose one day in the state of Florida, in the United States of America. His nose led him to someone's back porch where there was a nice, lovely bag of garbage. The bear was so happy. The person, however, looking out from their breakfast window was shocked and terrified! They called the Florida National Forest wildlife rescue team. Their job was to help get wildlife out of neighborhoods and back into the wild, where they would be safe.



The wildlife rescue team drove quickly to the house and came up with a plan. They would take a tiny dart with a sleepy drug and shoot it into the bear's bottom. That would make that bear very DROWSY. Their plan was to make those JAWS AND CLAWS fall asleep. Then they could safely move him to his new home in the forest. But the bear had a different idea.



As soon as the bear felt that dart, he began to run. And do you know what? He ran directly to the water! That house was right next to a lake. *OH NO*, thought the rescue team, *He is going to fall asleep in the water, and drown!!*

Running to the water was the worst possible place for that darted bear. He would drown there!



The bear began to swim and swim and become sleepier and sleepier. Now, kids, here is a question for you: What do you think that wildlife rescue team did? Remember, they were a rescue team! That was their job. Their job wasn't just to get that bear from eating the person's garbage on the back porch — they were to care for that bear and make sure he LIVED! So, what do you think that rescue team did? Yes, they jumped into the water to try and rescue that bear. Dangerous? Yes!



On that rescue team was a biologist named Adam Warwick. He took off his shirt and swam to that very drowsy, sinking bear. He wrapped his arms around that bear's neck and gave him a giant bear hug in the middle of the water.

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Without worrying about the size or strength of the bear, Adam Warwick grabbed ahold of the floundering animal — with a mission of rescue on his mind. He was determined to get that bear safely home.



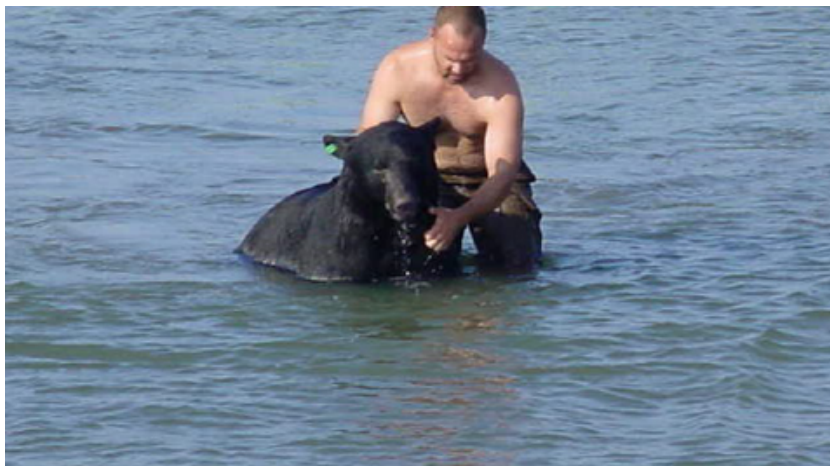
The bear was losing feeling in his legs. The bear struggled, trying to crawl onto Adam Warwick to stay afloat. Adam was tired. Oh, would the two of them now be able to make it back to shore?



The bear was having a hard time keeping its head above water. Adam didn't want this bear to drown! He was working to keep this 400-pound (181 kg) bear's head and nose up above the water. A man with a boat saw Adam struggling to manage the bear and offered to help — but it only complicated the situation and wasn't any use.



So, the brave biologist just kept swimming toward shore. Pulling and pulling. The bear was so heavy, and Adam Warwick was so tired — but he kept going.



Finally, they made it to shore!!

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The groggy bear and exhausted Adam Warwick were hoisted onto land.



The bear weighed too much for the crew to handle, so they used a tractor bucket to move the sedated bear.



Adam Warwick made sure the sleepy bear made it safely onto the transport vehicle. Surely, if the bear hadn't been so groggy, he would have given Adam a big bear hug.



Now, back in the forest of Florida, the bear is looking MUCH happier! No more garbage for him! Hopefully, his swimming days are over too!



Do you know, boys and girls, our church has a job of rescue too! We are to find people who may be digging through the garbage of sin. Maybe our first rescue efforts haven't worked and like that bear, they run from us!

But as a church — like Adam Warwick — we must be brave and go after them. Adam showed a lot of love and perseverance and bravery toward that bear. How much more should we show love and perseverance and bravery toward our former church members and former attendees to chase after them and help rescue them!

All image source: Becky Bickerstaff and Adam Warwick of The Nature Conservancy. The original story as reported by “One Green Planet” is here.

Brave Man Saving a Drowning 400-lb Black Bear Is Possibly one of the Greatest Rescue
When Adam Warwick witnessed a black bear drowning in the Gulf, he did the unthinkable and stepped into action to save the...

<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/man-rescues-black-bear/>

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