

The Bargain

Dr. Beck Weathers traded his hands for his family and still knows the price was the bargain of a lifetime. This is his story.

by Lindsay King

Situated in a room brimming with silent cattlemen and women, Dr. Beck Weathers opened up the second day of the 2019 Angus Convention in Reno, Nev., Nov. 1-3. His sobering tale began May 9, 1996.

On the perfect day, some consider climbing Mount Everest “easy.” If the high altitude doesn’t take your breath away, then the subzero temperatures certainly will.

“You basically say to your body ‘I’m gonna climb this thing and I’m taking you with me, so get ready,’” Weathers said as he described the agonizing process that is climbing the tallest peak in the world. At

29,029 feet above sea level, the peak shares airspace with jet planes.

Only the Sherpa, native to this region, can summit the peak without oxygen assistance or acclimation. Their bodies are simply accustomed to the altitude.

Armed with axes and shoe spikes, Weathers and a team of mountaineers climbed their way to the peak. Some might say they were inching to their doom.

“Nobody plans to be in one of the most famous mountaineering accidents in history,” Weathers said. “We were doing well until we managed to get caught in a

storm, which then turned into an absolute fight for survival.” There are moments in Weathers’ tale where his eyes glass over and a dramatic pause ensues. He’s back on Everest, shivering in the cold, reliving the terror that changed his life.

“I got hypothermic, went into a coma and was basically left for dead multiple times,” Weathers said. “Everybody knows that once you go into a hypothermic coma in the high mountains, you are going to die no matter what you do.”

High in the death zone of Mount Everest, Weathers unearthed the key to life. Buried amongst the snow and ice, he was given a second chance to live his.

After 22 hours in the storm, Weathers opened his eyes. Why? He still doesn’t know. Call it fate, destiny or something bigger, Weathers woke up from an impossible sleep.

“A total of eight people perished in that storm, including some pretty strong individuals,” Weathers said. “I was going to be number nine, but for reasons I don’t fully comprehend, I managed to wake up, stand up and walk out.”

In a twisted turn of fate, the hero of the most famous mountaineering accident in history is a helicopter pilot testing the depth of his own bravery. Weathers’ wife miraculously found a way to rescue a husband



Dr. Beck Weathers took Angus Convention attendees on his journey climbing Mount Everest.

whom had been falsely pronounced dead multiple times.

“To me, he [the pilot] is the most extraordinary person in this story,” Weathers said. “We are separated by language, by culture, by religion; but we are bound together by a bond of common humanity.”

Facing death inherently unveils what’s important in life. Being in the wrong place at the wrong time presented Weathers the opportunity to redirect his path, literally and figuratively.

“I am an entirely ordinary individual and we are all of the same clay,” he said. “If I can survive that which is un-survivable, so can you.”


If the story itself didn’t make it clear miracles are real, then Weathers’ reiterating the fact several times over certainly did.

“That day I learned that miracles do occur,” Weathers said. “In fact, I think they occur pretty commonly, but if they are not the type that grabs you by the lapels and shakes your teeth loose, then they’re not big enough.”

Weathers lost both of his hands, and now several scars snake down his face because of this tale. They are a daily reminder that opening his eyes was truly miraculous. He reminded the audience that opening their eyes that morning was in fact a miracle in itself, too.

“As we age we lose that sense of wonder and astonishment that life is there,” Weathers said. “The only time we get to see it again is in our children. I get to see it every single day and it is an exquisite treasure.”

Weathers climbed the tallest peak on six of the seven continents in search of peace and fulfillment. While attempting the seventh one, he realized he already possessed it.

“It was in my own backyard all along,” he said while choking back tears. “The only thing that matters are the people you hold in your heart and those who hold you in theirs.” 

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— Dr. Beck Weathers

