

A Story of Faith by Troy

Have you ever looked back on an event in your life and clearly seen God's hand and timing at work? I would like to share a personal story, and one of the most powerful hours in my recent memory.

We had just arrived at the Izmir Turkey Airport with plans to drive to Ephesus. We were greatly looking forward to seeing the amazing ruins of a city that Paul preached in, wrote to, may have been visited by John and Mary, and where John may have written his gospel. After deplaning we were delayed by multiple misadventures with the rental car company, feeling like we were losing important time.

Once finally on the road, we were again delayed by the need to fill the tank up. I guess this is a good time to mention that we originally were planning on touring Ephesus at the Jim's Story beginning of our trip, but couldn't make it work, and this was the only option that we could make it work within our itinerary. This is also probably a good time to mention that I had decided to take the scenic route (out of character for me, I'm a point A to B person, but also didn't want to deal with paying tolls through the rental car company).

About halfway to Ephesus, we saw a motorcycle collide with an automobile. We were distraught to see the rider and motorcycle cartwheel over the car in front of us after the impact. They continued to cartwheel down the road, the rider separating from the motorcycle, bike parts flying off, along with gloves, shoes, and helmet going in all different directions. It looked like the bike and rider cartwheeled around 200 feet from the impact with the car. (Insert Force/Mass/Speed Equation here for the engineers out there). Luckily, our car had one of those push buttons to put it in park. When I jumped out, I forgot to put it into park and Amelia caught it before we started to roll. I tried to do an assessment of the rider's condition. Luckily, he was wearing a helmet and heavily padded cold weather gear. I quickly tried to assess whether he had any neck injuries by checking for feeling in hands, legs, feet. This is probably a good time to mention that I am an engineer, not a doctor, although I grew up watching ER, and might have stayed in a Holiday Inn once.

The whole time I kept replaying a conversation I had recently had about how most times it's best not to move an injured person until paramedics arrive in case of internal injuries or back/spinal injuries. His leg was badly injured, but I suspected internal issues as well, based on what I witnessed. He began to express how cold he was on his leg and feet. I stood up, looking around for a solution. Really, I was looking at the other bystanders who had joined, hoping they would give up a jacket or something. Not seeing any movement, I decided to give up my shirt. I really didn't want to give up my shirt for many reasons. First, it

was the warmest shirt I had brought on this trip, and we had run into some unexpected very cold weather as low as 5 degrees F. Second, I had designed the shirt for another trip we had taken. Last, I knew if I gave up my shirt I most likely would not get it back, or if I did, it would likely be bloody and we didn't have laundry facilities available. But I also heard another voice, "if you have two shirts, give up one; and when I was in need did you help me?" So, not seeing another option, I took off my shirt, I fixed his pants around the wound as best I could and then wrapped my shirt around his leg and foot. At the same time my wife retrieved Amelia Grace's favorite Pokemon blanket, which she freely gave up knowing she may never get it back.

At this point in time the rider kept complaining of being cold. I was kneeling and talking with him, so really didn't notice that there was soon a pile of rugs, jackets, etc. that had piled up on top of him from the bystanders who saw two foreigners giving the literal shirt off their back and a pink cartoon covered blanket to start the pile. As a side note: we drove by the same location two days later, on our way back to the airport and the pile was still there!

Sometimes we need to be the ones to take the first step and hope that others are encouraged to join in, or to follow. We may not know fully what to do, but we can do what we know how to do. We can hold a hand, offer a blanket, pray, etc.

During the forty-five minute wait for the Police and Paramedics to arrive, I rotated kneeling down and holding the injured rider's hand with another gentleman who had stopped. It struck me that as I watched the other gentlemen silently praying (I'm assuming he was Muslim) and kissing the rider on the forehead, I was silently praying over him at the same time. It made me reflect afterwards about ambassadorship and representation. Who do we represent? Are we representing Christianity, Western Culture, America, my family, myself? Maybe the God that created all of us in His image? I suppose the answer is yes to all. For many of these folks this might be the only interaction they ever have with an American, or maybe a Christian. Hopefully, they come away with a positive impression.

I'll never forget when the other gentleman left, the look we gave each other. We couldn't speak in the same tongue, but clearly there was an understood connection! My heart and prayers continue to go out to the injured rider and the other folks that stopped that day to help. We never know what time or place God is putting us in, and that the little delays and changes to our plans that may be irritating to us may just be what God does to put us in the right place at the exact right moment to show His love.