

Roadside Assistance

The clanking of metal bouncing over pavement caused me to brake, move from left to right & make a sudden stop on the shoulder of the newly widened Mexican highway. As I prepared to get out of the car to check on the cause of the noise, one meter didn't feel like a particularly safe space between me & the cars whizzing by. But then continuing on wasn't really an option either. So, I said a quick prayer, took a deep breath & hopped out. Well, that distressing noise was the result of the decorative bar across the bottom of the car coming loose at the back end, driver's side, traffic side. Every time I bent over to check how I was going to fix it, another car or semi caused me to question the sanity of what I was doing. My prayer was short & to the point, not panicked but with a concern that comes when one is alone on a Mexican highway with no obvious solution to the problem. "Please send someone to help me. And please keep the traffic in their lane – preferable the far lane! Now what am I going to do?" I saw no way to reattach it, so I would have to detach it. Plan A – find pliers & unwind the wires – until I remembered the tool kit was buried under several things on the floor in the backseat, driver's side, traffic side. As I braced myself for another semi to pass, the little voice inside said "The wire isn't that strong, just kick it off." Wow, it worked! Thank you, Lord!

As I put the piece in the car & continued on my journey that hot Aug 2018 day, my prayers changed to words of thanksgiving. I had much more to be thankful for than the solution & protection I had just experienced. With different timing, it could have been a very different outcome. 5 minutes earlier, I was driving in a heavy rain, less visibility – who wants to sit on the side of the road, yet alone try to resolve the situation in the rain – driver's side, splashing traffic side! Also, for 2 hours prior to this time, I was driving in a construction zone, with no space to pull over & 2 way traffic to fear. And who knows what would have happened (control & damage) had the piece detached from the front end.

Now I realize that God certainly isn't obligated to answer us & from God "because I said so" is a perfectly acceptable answer. But with God, there is always purpose, no wasted moments, so I couldn't help but ask "Why?" Not an angry, doubting why but rather a curious teachable why. Well, I can't say there was an audible voice or writing on the windshield but an inner voice simply said "to slow you down." So, what did slowing down mean that day?

Slowing down, I was reminded again that God is all I need. See, that could have happened anywhere – in Tucson, where Fred would have helped me, or at the gas station where one of those truckers would have rescued me, or in Guaymas, where Pancho would have re-attached it. There, on the side of the road, it was just me & God. I asked Him to send someone to help, thinking I was alone & unable. But that day He showed me that with Him, I am able & never alone.

Slowing down could mean avoiding harm. As I continued on my way I came across not one but 2 semi-trailers disabled by exploded tires – as evidenced by some rather big pieces of rubber strewn all over the road. Did that delay cause me to avoid being hit by flying rubber or to avoid losing control maneuvering through those pieces at 100 km/hr? Hmm. Was I spared being part of an accident with the flipped pickup truck I saw later in my journey? Maybe, maybe not, but I was reminded that God's protection while not always obvious, is always there!

Slowing down refocused me. You'd think as a missionary I would just naturally live conscious of the precious relationship I have with Jesus. But that's not always the case, I sometimes get distracted or apathetic. God knows that odd happenings & interruptions get my attention. That day, I was reminded that God's love for me is so deep, He wants my attention. What a blessing to do the rest of that routine trip, more conscious of the ever-faithful travel partner I have in Jesus - talking, laughing, sharing our heart longings, observing, listening, doing life together.

Thank you Lord for showing your love for me in such creative ways!