

Accident, 10 Injured

James 1:2-3

*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,
for you know that the testing of your faith produces patience.*

The next accident happened in the United States. We were serving in Pitman, New Jersey pastoring a little church. Pitman is located in south Jersey where there are small private lakes. We had joined a lake swimming club and as members we were taking our children, visiting cousins, and one teenager from the church to swim. All of us were in our big Mercury Grand Marquis station wagon. As we traveled down a two-lane road going toward the lake we came to a very dangerous curve. I suddenly saw a Camaro IROC-Z sports car coming towards us at a high rate of speed. He failed to navigate the curve and lost control of his car. He side swiped the car in front of us and sent it off the road, then he careened down the middle of the roadway skidding sideways toward our car. I was traveling about 40 miles an hour. He was moving probably 60 or 70 miles an hour. As he came skidding toward us I saw there was nowhere to go. I couldn't go to the right because there was a big brick mailbox there. I couldn't go to the left because there was a deep ditch. I thought, "If he gains control he's going to go to the left of me," so I slammed on the brakes and yelled for everybody hang on. I hit his car broadside in the middle of that road. The t-top popped off and the passenger flew out of the car landing in an adjacent yard. The Camero continued sliding around us smashing into my driver side door and window.

In that panic moment all our windows broke. There was glass everywhere. The children in the backseat were screaming and crying. Marilyn was injured and in tremendous pain. She couldn't move. She couldn't even unbuckle her seatbelt. I couldn't open my door which was crushed by the Camero. He had spun around and hit the side of our car smashing the mirror and my window. Something hit and tore my ear lobe and my elbow was ripped and bleeding badly.

I eventually managed to get the door open and started pulling the children out through the broken windows. They all were bleeding badly from cuts and lacerations from the flying glass. The neighbors came from the house and began helping us pull the children out of the car.

At that point we did not know the extent of the damage and we didn't know how seriously anyone was injured. I carried the children out to the lawn where the neighbors helped them. Once they were safely on the lawn I went back to get Marilyn.

She was still sitting in the car and the car was smoking. I was afraid a spark might send the gas tank up in flames and she could be caught in the car. I kept insisting she get out of the car but she could not. She couldn't move. She said she hurt too badly. By this time somebody had called 911 and the ambulance arrived, then fire engines and emergency vehicles came. They helped Marilyn get out of the car. They put her on to a stretcher to get her into an ambulance. All of us were taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital.

We later found out the car that was run off the road had several passengers in it. One of them was a pregnant woman. She was also taken to the hospital. They were afraid she was going to go into early labor. They transported the two guys who were in the Camaro to the same hospital. I don't know if they had been drinking, but they appeared to be uninjured. Even the guy who flew out of the car and landed in the lawn seem to be uninjured.

We finally got to the emergency room and they began to treat all of our injuries. The doctors and nurses cared for the superficial wounds on the children and assured us that the children were not seriously injured. Everyone had cuts and bruises. Marilyn probably had the worst injury. She had eight cracked ribs and whiplash. We were satisfied to be able to talk back and forth between emergency bays that separated us by curtains. We knew the children were okay and were calming down. There were 10 people injured in that accident.

As we were walking out of the hospital my doctor happened to come in. He asked what had happened. He saw my ear and my head wrapped with gauze and asked what they had done for it. He looked at it and insisted I go back into the emergency room where he examined my ear and said it needed stitches. He spent time stitching up my ear and then going back to my arm and stitching it up.

The next day I went to see the car. The car was completely demolished. The front end, which had a huge eight cylinder engine, was completely compacted and crushed. The man at the body shop asked how many people died in the accident. I told him that no one had died but 10 people were injured, none seriously. He said, "That's amazing because any car that comes in like this there is usually one fatality at least. You can count your blessings that no one was seriously injured. Looking at this car you would think the front passengers would have died.

This was another one of those cases where the angel of the Lord was camping around us and delivering us. The Lord did take care of us. The children were not injured seriously. They were able to go on with life. Marilyn did not have a good summer. She had to sit up in a recliner and was not able to lay down flat because of her injuries. I had severe whiplash and had to go to a chiropractor

three times a week for almost a year. Again, God took care of us in what could have been deadly.