

By Kurt Johnson | September 2018

HE SENDS US ... SNOWPLOWS



The winter of 2018 was a hard one for our family, but not so much because of bad weather as about loss. In January, my younger brother, David, passed away suddenly while visiting his wife's family in Norway, and the following month, my mother-in-law joined in passing through to the other side. Both came at a time when money was tight in the Johnson house, leaving Paula and me to work out the financial details of two unscheduled trips.

After renting a car and driving from our home in Provo, Utah, to Arizona for my brother's funeral in late January, we began preparations for another drive, back to our hometown in Roseville, California, the first weekend in March, for her mother's services. Our road trip would cover familiar roads, across Nevada along Interstate 80 and on down through the mountain pass into Northern California. That meant descending through Donner Pass on potentially treacherous roads, or perhaps even being stopped completely if heavy snow closed the freeway.

In the weeks and days leading up to our drive, we prayed fervently for divine assistance, and in my case, that meant counseling the Lord and suggesting that he clear the roads and give us beautiful weather in which to travel. As the day approached, it became increasingly clear that He had another idea entirely. He wanted to teach me

some things, one of which is that the purpose of prayer is to align my will with His, not to tell Him how to answer my pleadings.

The forecast was ominous and as the week progressed leading up to our Friday morning departure, the forecast for that part of California only grew more grim. Additionally, our preparations for a place to stay took a hit when Paula's father's home, where we were planning on staying, had a run-in with skunks, removing it as an option for us. That's when the Lord began to execute His plan for us. A day or two before our journey, my sister, Kim, texted to ask if we wanted to use her accrued Marriott points to stay in a hotel. God had provided for us a solution to our housing problem through my sister.

Then, Friday arrived. As the service for Pat, Paula's mom, was scheduled for Saturday afternoon, we did not have much of a window in which to make the drive. Also, with school schedules on Friday morning, our departure time needed to be a little later than we might otherwise have done. So, we were faced with the need to quickly get across Nevada so we could arrive at the border and begin our descent, if the roads were even open, while we still had daylight. To make things more interesting, because we were driving a rental car, we would not be allowed to install snow chains if they were required at the time we headed down the hill.

Part 2 of the Lord's plan of tender mercies kicked in when I arrived at Budget to pick up the rental car. The man working there regretted to inform me that the car we had rented, a full-sized sedan, was not available, and he wanted to know if he could substitute a different vehicle, which it turned out was a Jeep Renegade, a smaller Jeep, but with four-wheel drive. By the time this trip was done, that

Family Favorites Rememberized

would prove to be a massive miracle in our lives. I gladly accepted.

We loaded the car and got in, along with our daughter, Keisha, and her husband, Trevor, who were joining us on the trip. Our older son, Josh, and his family of five had left in their own minivan a few hours before we did. That meant we were able to get reports on road conditions from Josh as we travelled. We had also made contact with friends in Reno, on the chance we would end up needing to spend the night there, and we were able to be in contact with them as well.

As we headed across the Salt Flats to leave Utah, there were not a lot of positive signs. The high winds had turned over a number of semi trucks and they lay strewn along the roadside on that stretch of I-80. Eventually, however, we encountered a couple of minor weather events, but made very good time across Nevada, on target to hit Reno well before dark. Then, Josh informed us that he had been forced to install chains to get down through the Pass, but our friends in Reno told us their daughter was making the drive in her all-wheel drive vehicle just a couple of hours ahead of us. We also saw that the weather report for overnight and into Saturday morning was even worse, so we decided to go for it right then.

As we descended along the freeway, watching cars be turned around at a pair of checkpoints we hit along the way, we were blessed because of that previous tender mercy. Because we were driving a four-wheel drive vehicle, we were allowed to continue on towards our destination. The drive was not fun, however, as it took us more than three hours to cover the final 100 miles to our final destination. I did my best to follow in the tracks of the vehicles that were ahead of me, especially as darkness arrived. For one stretch, when the cars ahead of us had pulled far enough in front, and there seemed to be no additional vehicles behind us, we were driving in white-out conditions on a windy mountain road, and we seemed to be all alone out there.

On two occasions during our descent, when seeing the road ahead of us was extremely difficult, we once again saw the hand of the Lord intercede in our behalf. Twice, large snow plow trucks came out from the freeway on-ramp right in front of us, and we were able to fall in right behind them, following those flashing lights as they plowed the snow clear and dropped sand right in our pathway. Those plows were critical in our safety and eventual arrival at the hotel that night. It was raining in Roseville, but we were past the heavy snows of the Sierras.

Our prayers were more sincere that night as we thanked our Father in Heaven for getting us to our destination.

As I look back on this experience, I see a parallel with our lives. In many things, our loving Father has pre-arranged the circumstances of our lives so that certain things will be there when we need them, like a hotel room or a four-wheel drive vehicle. Then, even with all He has done to prepare the way before us, there will be times in our lives when we need Him and His tender mercies for immediate help, and that's when He sends us a snow plow.

His plan for each our lives in an individual one, with those four-wheel drive vehicles already in place, and then, our Savior walked into a Garden and bled from every pore so we would know that when we really needed Him, he would send us a snow plow... In the Book of Mark, in the Bible, we read about the Apostles in a boat battling a rough sea, calling out to the passenger in the back, Jesus Christ, and asking Him how he could lie asleep. He stood and rebuked the storm and then asked them about the status of their faith. Didn't they know He was in the boat with them? and when they needed Him, they had access to a snow plow, the atonement He offers each of us to help us reach the destination He has prepared for us.