

## Snow plow duty

The recent ice storm in January 2004 reawakened old memories of when I plowed snow in the Columbia River Gorge. In those days, I was working in Rooster Rock State Park as a Park Ranger. During the winter night shift, we were often given snow plow duty after completing an eight hour shift at the park.

We would be “called out” some time during the early afternoon of our day shift and given the option of staying at work or going home until we were to report for duty at the town of Cascade Locks at 8:00 pm that night. We would then pull a 12 hour session with the ice and snow behind the wheel of a snow plow. That meant we would need to meet at the town of Troutdale at 7:00 pm to car pool it in a State Vehicle.

Given the weather conditions and the distances we would need to travel to plow snow, we would all opt for working straight through until our normal quitting time, and then grab a quick dinner to eat after work. We would also grab something to eat on the run behind the wheel of the snow plow to last us until we could eat breakfast at some time around 9:00 the following morning.

The ice and snow storms in the Columbia Gorge are infamous for their power. The winds sometimes blow fifty miles per hour and the temperatures drop to 10 degrees. In conditions like that, a fifteen ton snow plow gets pummeled around a bit without trying to remove eighteen inches of newly fallen snow in the process. We were ever mindful that to get out of the snow plow could be a disastrous move

I was reminded of the storm on the Sea of Galilee where Jesus calmed the storm at sea which so frightened the fishermen that they thought they would perish. In the end, the very fishermen who were fearful of the storm were frightened by the power of the very one who displayed mastery over the storm asking “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”[1]

The apostle Paul was given many times when he probably felt fearful. His journey to Rome culminated in his need to defend himself before The Sanhedrin, Felix, Festus and Agrippa[2]. He did so with such vigor that Festus thought him mad and Agrippa was giving Christianity a much more serious look asking Paul if he thought he could persuade him to be a Christian in such a short time.[3]

Given the adversities he faced in his missionary voyages, I would have thought that he would have given up out of fear a long time ago, but his reply to Agrippa was that he wished all who hear him would be such as he is except for the chains which bind him. During his time before the Sanhedrin, he faced such adversity that the Roman Commander thought he would be torn to pieces by the mob. He took every opportunity to witness to all who would listen to him. His faith was certainly so amazing as to have him state in his letter to the Philippians that for him to live is Christ, and to die is gain[4].

I believe that God gives us His strength in many ways through various and sundry means. Even though the trials of traveling 400 miles behind the wheel of a snow plow in the dark of night pales by comparison to the trials Paul faced during his life, the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ is the same through all situations in which Christians find themselves. “I am with you always even to the end of the age” [5].

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[1] Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41

[2] Acts 21: 27-31

[3] Acts 26:25-32

[4] Acts 23:10

[5] Matthew 28:20