

Echoes of Grace



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Is in
Heaven

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Grandpa *Is in* Heaven



If you had a life-threatening accident, would you be ready for death and what follows?

Kyle's grandpa was. He had repented of his sins and placed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ when he was young. After he retired from his job, he even got involved with sharing the good news of salvation with children in after-school programs. He was delighted to tell others of how the Savior came down to earth, suffered, bled and died so He could bring undeserving sinners home to heaven with Him. He liked to tell others of the peace they could have through faith in Jesus Christ.

Kyle's grandpa lived in a house next to the beach on the shores of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, in Washington State. One morning in August when the weather was balmy, the sky blue and the water as smooth as glass, Kyle and his Grandpa

Before Grandpa could do anything to stop it, the kayak flipped over, and both Grandpa and Kyle were plunged underwater...

decided to go on an adventure. Grandpa carried his long, red kayak across the beach. It was a one-man kayak. Grandpa set the sleek, lightweight craft in the shallow water and sat down in the main seat. He had to wiggle to get in because the seat was narrow and small. Then Kyle, only six years old, wiggled into the

small opening for gear at the back of the kayak. An adult could never have fit into the smaller opening, but it was the perfect size for Kyle to sit in.

They both wore bright-yellow flotation vests, and they both had the long, double-bladed paddles that kayakers commonly use. The slender craft easily sped through the water. They had kayaked together many times before. If they watched carefully, they could discover schools of small fish, crabs, and occasionally sea lions, otters, orcas or even whales feeding.

They were about a quarter mile from shore when Kyle leaned suddenly to one side of the kayak, upsetting the balance. Before Grandpa could do anything to stop it, the kayak flipped over, and both Grandpa and Kyle were plunged underwater, with the kayak on top of them! Their legs were still trapped in the body of the kayak. It happened as fast as you could blink an eye.

Last Instructions

It might have been August, but the water was shockingly cold. A strong current brings it down from the Arctic to the Washington Coast. It is far too cold for all but the hardiest people to swim in.

The flip took Grandpa by complete surprise. Underwater, he found himself involuntarily gulping down a great quantity of seawater. He fought against it, but it poured relentlessly into his mouth and nostrils. The two were upside down in the frigid water for about a minute. A minute is a long time to go without air to breathe! At last Grandpa got himself free and, with an effort that seemed to take everything out of him, he flipped the kayak upright again. Kyle was still snugly in the seat. After a few seconds of the boy trying to catch his breath, much to Grandpa's relief, he saw that the boy was wet and shivering from the cold but otherwise unhurt.

"Thank you, Lord, for keeping the boy safe." Grandpa uttered a heartfelt prayer. He had made it a habit to give thanks in every situation, even if they were full of trouble.

"Are you okay, Kyle?"

"I am okay, Grandpa. How about you, Grandpa?"

"I don't know Kyle. I feel weak. Something is wrong with me. I don't think I can climb back in the kayak. Let me see if I can push us back to shore by swimming."



He felt weak as if all his strength had ebbed away.

Grandpa, with only his hands and head visible out of the water, edged slowly around to the back of the kayak. The kayak was half-filled with saltwater. At the back of the boat, Grandpa realized that he didn't have the strength to hang on, much less to push the boat to shore. Something had happened to sap his strength while he was submerged. He felt weak as if all

his strength had ebbed away. Was this weakness due to swallowing all the seawater? It felt like it had gone into his lungs. Or had the sudden plunge into the cold water triggered a heart attack? He didn't know.

"Kyle."

"Yeah, Grandpa."

"I don't think I can hang on much longer.

Listen, don't worry about me. I want you to try to paddle back to shore, but every once in a while I want you to raise your paddle over your head so people on shore will know something is wrong. And remember, don't panic. I know the Lord is going to take care of us. Can you do that for me?"

"Yeah, Grandpa, I can do that."

Then Grandpa let go of the kayak and leaned back in the water to float on his back. He folded his hands on his chest. He let the life vest do the work of keeping him afloat. When he was younger, he had been a swimming and scuba diving instructor in the Navy, and he knew his best chance of staying alive in the cold water was to conserve his energy.

Strange Peace

It seemed like seconds later the two became separated and out of sight of each other. The boy paddled, but it didn't seem to bring him closer to the shore. Every few minutes he would lift the paddle up over his head, just like Grandpa asked him to. Grandpa, for his part, knew there was precious little he could do to help get rescued. He knew that lying on his back in the water would make him nearly invisible to anyone on shore. He could feel the cold water numbing his body. Looking up, he saw a beautiful blue sky without a cloud in it. It reminded him, even though he was in deep trouble, that God was in control. He realized that if help didn't come shortly, the cold water would claim his life. The thought didn't upset him. It was strange, but the peace of God whom he loved and trusted filled his heart. He would do everything possible to stay alive, of course, but if he didn't make it, he knew he would enter into the joy of the Lord in heaven. The thought that God loved him so much that Christ should die for him consoled his heart.

Attempted Rescue

About forty-five minutes after the accident, Kyle's mom and grandmother returned home from a shopping trip. Kyle's mom was curious about how her dad and son were doing on their kayaking trip. She walked out on the beach, and cupping her hand like a sun visor on a hat, peered out over the water. She





spotted the kayak still far away from shore. She could make out Kyle sitting at the back of the kayak, but she couldn't see her dad. She guessed he must be leaning way back in his seat, probably resting. Then she saw Kyle raise his paddle up over his head, and she knew by this

signal they were in trouble. She realized in a flash that her dad *really* was not in the boat, but missing!

"Mom, there's bad trouble!" she said. "Call the Coast Guard and tell them Grandpa is missing. I am going to take the other kayak and go out there."

Within minutes she had launched the other kayak and was paddling out to her son. When she got there, she asked, "Where's Grandpa?"

"Grandpa's in heaven," Kyle replied calmly. The boy, like his grandpa, had faith in the Lord Jesus. When he had lost sight of Grandpa floating on the water, he assumed that Grandpa had drowned.

The Coast Guard station was about twenty miles away. The big cutter left the station within minutes. A little later they also sent out the helicopter to help in the search. However, after learning that the grandpa had been in the water for over an hour, they

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had little hope they would find him alive.

Grandpa had lost all sensation in his legs and arms, and he was fighting to keep from losing consciousness, when he heard the big whir of the helicopter's rotors. Suddenly, the downdraft of the whirling blades churned up the water all around him, making choppy waves in the otherwise placid water. The helicopter veered off as suddenly as it had first appeared. It was carrying too much fuel to hover in one place and had to go off to dump some fuel before it could safely hold its position in one place and lower the rescue basket. It reappeared overhead, and a rescue swimmer jumped into the water. Grandpa barely recalls being hoisted into the helicopter and flown to the intensive care unit of a hospital. He learned later that his body temperature had fallen dangerously low—to 81 degrees! Once he arrived at the hospital and doctors learned the details, they were amazed he was still alive.

True Peace

Grandpa faced death and yet had a great peace about it. How about you? If death should stare you in the face, would you be ready to go? You would be, if





you belonged, by faith, to the Savior of sinners, for on the cross, the Lord Jesus paid the terrible penalty of sin so that all that believe on Him might be forgiven and have their sins washed away. **“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”** (1 Corinthians 15:3).

The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world and is drawing people to faith in Christ. The Son gave His life on the cross and is presently seeking lost sinners to bring them back to God. The Holy Spirit is at work, convicting people of sin, making them feel the need of forgiveness, and pointing them to the Savior.

God wants people to be saved so that they will know the greatness of this love for all eternity. **“God is love”** (1 John 4:8).

People need to be saved because if they don't return to God in repentance and faith, the sins they have done will bring them down to a real hell. It is not God's will that any souls should perish in hell. “The Lord ... is long-suffering ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). But perish they must, if they refuse to be rescued by God.

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Imagine someone far out at sea, all alone in a small boat, on a dark and stormy night. Along comes a Coast Guard ship to rescue them. Instead of receiving the help offered to them, they tell the officers



on the Coast Guard cutter to go away and leave them alone. The Coast Guard cutter reluctantly sails away. A short time later the man and his boat are swallowed up by the waves. This is just a little picture of those who reject the Savior, only to eventually perish in a lost eternity. God is patiently waiting for sinners to turn to Him, but He will not wait and hold back His anger forever. **“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger forever”** (Psalm 103:8-9).

Will you bow your heart to the One who conquered sin and death on your behalf, so that peace and the good of eternal life might be yours?

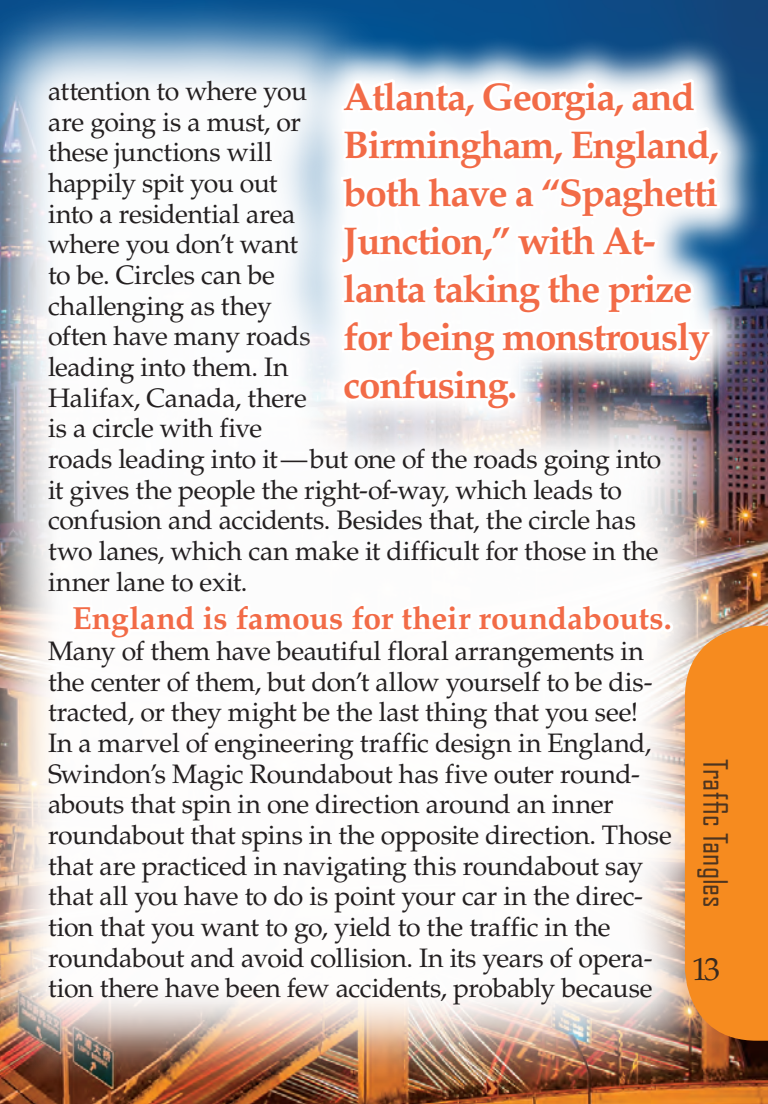
“Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee” (Job 22:21).

God’s peace is simple and deep. *Traffic Tangles* shows the simplicity of His plan of salvation open to everyone.



Traffic Tangles

Even experienced drivers are challenged as they attempt to navigate confusing circles, roundabouts and interchanges. Some interchanges are so confusing that they actually look like a plate of spaghetti! Atlanta, Georgia, and Birmingham, England, both have a “Spaghetti Junction,” with Atlanta taking the prize for being monstrously confusing. Paying strict



attention to where you are going is a must, or these junctions will happily spit you out into a residential area where you don't want to be. Circles can be challenging as they often have many roads leading into them. In Halifax, Canada, there is a circle with five roads leading into it—but one of the roads going into it gives the people the right-of-way, which leads to confusion and accidents. Besides that, the circle has two lanes, which can make it difficult for those in the inner lane to exit.

Atlanta, Georgia, and Birmingham, England, both have a “Spaghetti Junction,” with Atlanta taking the prize for being monstrously confusing.


England is famous for their roundabouts. Many of them have beautiful floral arrangements in the center of them, but don't allow yourself to be distracted, or they might be the last thing that you see! In a marvel of engineering traffic design in England, Swindon's Magic Roundabout has five outer roundabouts that spin in one direction around an inner roundabout that spins in the opposite direction. Those that are practiced in navigating this roundabout say that all you have to do is point your car in the direction that you want to go, yield to the traffic in the roundabout and avoid collision. In its years of operation there have been few accidents, probably because



everyone has to slow down to a snail's pace just to survive unscathed.

These road designs require a person to be on high alert, have quick reflexes, and their eyes in every direction at once. It is a challenge that not everyone can handle, for many different reasons. They may be mentally or physically handicapped, there may be a language barrier, or they may not be able to drive due to their age.

Simple, Understandable Plan

But God, in His great love and compassion towards mankind, has made the way of salvation so simple and plain that anyone can come to Him. He does not require skill, ability or knowledge on our part. **“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.... He was buried, and... He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”** (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). There is nothing for us to do; Christ has done it all, so that rich or poor, young or old, intelligent or simple, talented or unskilled, can have their sins forgiven and have eternal life. **“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast”** (Ephesians 2:8-9). “Saved through faith” means that we need to ask the Lord to forgive our sins and simply believe in our hearts that God has accepted us because of the work that His Son Jesus did on Calvary's cross. This is the magnificent and beautiful **“simplicity that is in Christ”** (2 Corinthians 11:3)! 

Nothing but the Name of Jesus

Nothing but the name of Jesus
Can avail in danger's hour—
Nothing but the name of Jesus,
When the clouds of trouble lower.

Only through the blood of Jesus
Can the guilty soul have peace;
Only through the blood of Jesus
Satan's captives find release.

Dying sinner, look to Jesus,
Once upon the cross for thee;
Think upon the Savior, Jesus,
Stretched and nailed upon the tree!

Every mark of dark dishonor
Heaped upon His thorn-crowned brow!
There, oh, read the wondrous story
Of His cross, its shame and woe!

Sinner, hear the matchless story:
Listen simply and believe;
From the risen Lord in glory,
Life, eternal life, receive.

Jesus died, that condemnation
No believer e'er should know;
Now He lives, and God's salvation
Is our portion here below.



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*“God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world;
but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17).*

