

## That'll Preach! (If I survive!)



<sup>3</sup> A prudent man foresees the difficulties ahead and prepares for them; the simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences. (*Proverbs 22:3, Living Bible*)

When I was a public-school teacher, I would constantly have moments of "Remember this for the next time you are talking about...*Fill in the blank*." Well now that has shifted into "Remember this because THAT'LL PREACH!" And wow, this past Sunday was an adventure that I won't be forgetting anytime soon.

But to get the full impact of this moment, I need to take you back to a month ago. At my house in Kentucky, our driveway goes between two trees that a Mack truck can fit between—if you are paying attention. On this particular day, I was **NOT** paying attention and I clipped one of the trees with my car pretty hard on the passenger side. Don't ask, because I don't know how I did it, but I did. I got out to see how bad the damage was. The rear passenger door got some cosmetic damage—but it wasn't THAT noticeable, and the tire looked fine. Whew, I got off lucky, or so I thought.

The next day I drove the car, I had a gut feeling that something was perhaps a little off with the wheel that made contact with the tree. There was a new rhythm pattern that I had not heard before and perhaps it took a little more effort to keep the car in the middle of the lane? But it didn't seem like that big of a deal, so I promised myself to keep an eye and ear on it and to get it checked out soon because again, it looked FINE from the outside. I really didn't worry about it because most of the time it seemed to be driving normally.

Fast forward to last Sunday, I am driving up I24 to come and worship with my church family. I had a great sermon ready to go, I had my husband, J. W., with me ready to play some music, no wobble, no nothing. Until there was. Around mile 12, J. W. felt something out of whack and told me to pull over because he thought we had a flat. I did and then got out to look at it. The TIRE was fine, but when we tried to drive, there was no question that "Houston, we have a problem." We drove very slowly on the shoulder to exit 7 and pulled off. When we got a real, up-close look at it we saw that the wheel was literally being held onto the car by ONE LUG BOLT. And then we observed all the other lug bolts had BROKEN OFF. Yeah, I know, you don't have to tell me how fortunate and blessed we are that the wheel did not fall off as I was going 70 down the highway. I know. And I praise God that we were safe, and that people came to our aid. But, let me preach a little now.

Church, we can't ignore the wobbles, because eventually those wobbles will evolve into wheels falling off and causing great harm. How many times have we told ourselves that everything is fine because from the outside—it looks okay. But we don't know what is happening behind the hubcap, we don't see the actual erosion of what is holding everything together, but there are signs. There are always signs. They start out as a whisper of warning, but eventually they turn into a scream of despair because the lug bolts of our life DO NOT grow back on their own like the arms of a starfish. They require maintenance, repair, and sometimes a total overhaul.

So let us be on the look out for wobbles, and then let us have the courage to check and see what is causing them. This can be the wobbles of our individual lives, family, friendships, church, community, and society in general. It is God's will that we SAFELY drive down the road, TOGETHER. As for me, I am now running to the doctor whenever I hear my knee crack! Fool me once...you know the rest.