



## **The Acts of God In The Journey of Faith**

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The mention of "Acts of God" has different meanings for different people. Insurance companies have clauses in their policies under Acts of God. They state that any acts of nature are acts of God.

There was an Australian movie back in 2001 based on an insurance company's understanding of Acts of God. This comedy was called *The Man Who Sued God*. It involved an ex-lawyer who sues God because his boat is struck by lightning, and his insurance company refuses to pay, claiming it to be an act of God. By claiming the Christian churches and Jewish synagogues to be God's representatives on earth, they are to be held as the legally responsible party. Their situation puts them in the difficult position of either having to pay out large sums of money or proving that God does not exist.

Now, people of faith constantly recognize the acts of God as part of the adventure with God. They see how God acts in the world and in life. These acts are very personal and enter life situations in a significant manner.

"What should have been a joyous occasion turned into a nightmare of grief. Randy Hoyt watched helplessly as his wife Kris went into the hospital for an emergency caesarean section operation when only 5 months pregnant. Due to the large amount of blood loss, Kris required 30 units of blood. As the doctors battled to save her life Randy cried out to God, "God, what do you want? I know you can heal her; why don't you?"

God didn't heal her. Kris died and 16 days later their premature born daughter, Grace, lost her struggle for life. Randy was left the single parent of six children. "What about our plans, God?" He asked. "Who will teach the kids, guide them, and love them like their Mother?"

Randy soon found out. A program was started which became known as "Help Bring Hope To The Hoyt Kids." Over the next six months, hundreds of people worked, sent money, donated meals and supplies and poured love into Randy's family. Randy received more than 500 letters, e-mails and cards from people who said they were praying for him.

At the end of six months the medical bills are all paid, the mortgage has been paid and Randy is back at work. God did not save his wife, but God's love was ministered to Randy and his children in deeply profound ways after Kris' death.

The pain of Kris' and Grace's death of course remained. Yet when he started to sink into despair Randy could imagine the two of them in heaven together, fully alive, healthy and full of joy. "See her as she is now," he felt the Holy Spirit saying. "She is alive."

Reflecting upon his experience Randy says, "I asked God for the life of my wife; I received instead a lesson on the nature of God. God is good. Armed with that knowledge, I have no fear for today or the future. God will always be enough...for any situation." [Source: Randy Hoyt, "Seeing God," Pentecostal Evangel, January 21, 2001, pp.14-15]

Friends, God acts in our lives in ways that are beyond our understanding. We acknowledge God as the one who created us and all that is. From the moment creation was called into being, God was active in the world. From the first ray of sunshine in the morning to the last fading colors of the sunset, God is active. From the instant a new born child takes a breath, god reminds us of the gift of life.

The journey of faith one experiences teaches us a lot about God. The bible teaches us about the activity of God throughout human history. The main thread and theme that is woven right through Holy Scripture is the Salvation story of God.

As people of faith, you and I are to remember the ways in which God acts in our lives. Recall now some of things that God has done in your life.

Do you recall when God:

- Helped you make it through tough times
- Inspired you to go beyond your comfort zone
- Led you to make a difference in someone's life
- Strengthened you when everything else seemed to be crumbling around you
- Guided you when a difficult decision had to be made
- Encouraged you to forgive and to seek forgiveness
- Blessed you with a wonderful family and special friends
- Loved you when others seemed not to care
- Granted you many years of marriage
- Added a child to the family

Friends, God has a special way to act in our lives as we move through this Journey of Faith. Sometimes it takes a very difficult situation to see how God has actively been there in one's life.

The following personal testimony is by a person named Gayle Erwin and can help us to see how God is active in all of life.

"When I was six years old, my Father was severely injured in an airplane accident and was left partially paralyzed and brain damaged. My Mother then became the breadwinner in the house. Since my Mother was often 'not there' as she attempted to make a living and Dad was 'not there' physically or mentally, the stage was set for family failure. But our family did not fail! Through difficult times, both parents stayed faithful to God and to us.

Prayer, belief, steadfastness and love surrounded us – money and fine homes didn't. When my Father died, my two brothers and I stood in front of his casket and made the following statement to the friends who had gathered for the

funeral service: “Our Father did not leave a financial empire for us to carry on. Many things that a dad normally does with his children, ours was unable to do. He was unable to teach us many things that a Dad normally teaches. But he did leave us something that he had. He left us with a love of God, a love of the Bible, a love for people, an understanding of worship and an inability to hate. We feel that he has left us only those things that will last. So we stand here before you as his adult children and declare publicly that we will follow his God.” [Gayle Erwin in his personal testimony. (Erwin, Gayle D., "The Jesus Style," Word (1988) Page 63)]

My dear brothers and sisters, God acts by entering our world and our lives everyday. The sending of Jesus to the world is the most important aspect of the faith journey. As John 3:16 states, **16“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.** The love God has for the world blessed us with our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord’s entrance into the world affirms God’s intentions to save the people of the world, to save you and me. God is an active God; always there, always presence.

Well, our journey of faith is given a boost to live faithfully with Jesus Christ leading the way. Our acceptance of Jesus as Lord assures us of Salvation. The Gospel of John continues to affirm God’s activity in the world, **17“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.** An active God and an active Christ. The Mighty Acts of God come through Jesus.

So friends, I ask that you continue to look for the Acts of God in your journey of faith. Most of all let us remember that Jesus was sent to this world to save you and me. So may the Acts of God renew your commitment to the One God who gives us life and actively nourishes our faith. May we be attentive to the way in which God acts in our lives.

So on this Trinity Sunday, let us remember that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit actively breathes through us every day. We have a God who loves us. We have a Christ who offers us a way into the future. We have a Spirit who energizes us and gives us hope. We have an active God who loves you and loves me.

Let us pray: Dear God, we thank you for loving us so much that you sent your Son Jesus to save us. Your act of love truly moves us to commit our lives to your grace, hope and peace. Remind us, God, of your constant presence throughout this season and throughout this life. Thank you for Jesus and for the ways he moves in our lives. We thank you for your Spirit who encircles us with your presence. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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### John 3:1-17 (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, “**Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.**” <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “**Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.** <sup>6</sup>**What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.** <sup>7</sup>**Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’** <sup>8</sup>**The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.**” <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, “**Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?**

<sup>11</sup>**“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony.** <sup>12</sup>**If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?** <sup>13</sup>**No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.** <sup>14</sup>**And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,** <sup>15</sup>**that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.**

<sup>16</sup>**“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.** <sup>17</sup>**“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.**

### Romans 8:12-17 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.