

“...Soft with Showers...”

“Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof” ([Psalm 65:9, 10](#)).

Rain. Rain. More rain. It was the topic of discussion around many coffee tables. Men were grumbling. They could not get in the fields to plant their crops. Sunday conversations after church revolved around this abundance of rain. Regrettably, it resembled more the murmuring of the Israelites in the wilderness, rather than humble submission to a creator that had worked out all things for the good of them that love him.

May 5, 1995, was one of the brightest and most beautiful days of spring. There was hardly a cloud in the sky. Dust was rolling from behind all the heavy equipment rumbling down the gravel roads, hurrying to their fields. Farmers were anxious to get their crops planted before the next downpour. The roads and fields were filled with farmers moving from one field to another in organized chaos, and the air smelled of a new beginning. Winter had passed; the snow had melted and washed everything of its pollution. God had withheld the rain long enough to allow everyone to get back to work.

The morning at school passed very swiftly; for it was Friday and I was in a hurry to get home to deliver seed corn to Dad, planting in the field. I anxiously awaited the 3:12 bell. And then, as an alarm awakes you in the dead of your sleep, it rang! I raced to the bus. The bus soon rolled down the hill. As we bounced and bumped along to the bottom of the hill by school, we were alerted to a siren, a sheriff's siren. We spotted the white blazer streaking west out of town.

The dusty bus ride came to a stop at the end of our driveway around 3:45 that afternoon. My siblings and I jumped off the bus and raced to the house to engulf a snack before going back outside to tackle our daily livestock chores.

We entered the house, full of enthusiasm for the weekend. We discovered an empty house. We shrugged it off by thinking Mom was bringing lunch to the guys working in the field. But as we began looking around, everything seemed to have just stopped in its wrong place. In the garage, Mom had been cleaning and had left the hose attached to the hydrant. Everything from every last corner in the garage lay sprawled out on the lawn. This was odd, for Mom never left a job without finishing it first.

We ate lunch, only to be interrupted by a phone call. It was my Aunt Fran. (What was she calling for?) I could tell she was swallowing back tears. She asked if Mom was around. I replied with no. Not having the foggiest idea of what was taking place, I asked if I could take a message. She then started crying and told me that my father and brother and sister had been in an accident. It struck me like a slap in the face. I was in shock. I did not cry. I could not cry. Not now, maybe later. We hung up.

I frantically told my brother and sister what my Aunt Fran had just told me. Then, I changed my clothes and ran outside to do chores. I jumped on the tractor, my heart pounding. No sooner was I out of the machine shed, than a string of cars filed onto the yard. I recognized many of them as close neighbors, friends, family, but a few strangers were also present. I also saw a mangled corn planter being dragged on the yard. It did not even sink in. (That was our corn planter. How could it be? Why would ours be wrecked, let alone, be pulled by a neighbor?)

There were so many willing hands that night; I cannot begin to name them all. The helpful men refused to let me do my chores and so I told them what had to be done. I ran back to the house and changed my clothes. Grandpa and Grandma came unexpectedly and drove us up to Sioux Falls. That was one of the quietest and most nerve-racking trips to Sioux Falls I have ever made.

We walked into the hospital. As we entered the building, filled with buzzers and beepers and the aroma of cleanliness, we spotted my other grandpa and grandma. They took us to find Mom and Dad. The minister also came. We were all taken to a small, cramped room. Here, a doctor came and told us that my 2 year-old, brother, Michael was in critical condition. Michael was taken up to Peds ICU (Pediatrics Intensive Care Unit). The doctors came and gave updates on Michael about every hour.

That night was an awful night. There were many tears shed for a boy we had known for only two years. They brought us bad news about 10:00 p.m. Michael's brain was swelling.

I left around 11:00 that night. I never really found out what had happened until I was ready to leave, and I overheard my father's explanation to a family member.

Dad was driving the tractor with the corn planter in tow from a piece of ground about 15 miles away. Lindsey and Michael, my youngest siblings, were riding along with Dad in the tractor. Dad turned a corner and noticed Michael had fallen asleep. Dad decided to lay him down in the back window. As Dad laid him down, the tractor veered off towards the ditch. Dad turned back around and corrected the steering too quickly, causing the tractor to catch the shoulder of the road and turn over on its side.

Michael flew through the side window, while Lindsey was thrown clear of the wreck through the front window. As the tractor slammed into the ditch, Dad stabilized himself with the steering wheel.

Dad crawled out immediately, only to hear the fan run into the radiator. He quickly shut off the tractor. Frantically, he looked for his children! He spotted Lindsey standing on the road uninjured. Then, he saw Michael's body lying with his head still underneath the tractor cab. Quickly, he pulled him out from underneath the tractor and began sprinting to the nearest farmhouse, an eighth of a mile away.

A carpenter, remodeling at the nearest farm place, had seen the tractor lying in the ditch before Dad got to the yard. Thankfully, the carpenter had already dialed 911. My father laid my brother on the lawn and the woman who lived there started performing CPR on my brother. They could not get him to breathe! They rolled him over onto his side, allowing them to remove the blood and mucous that had built up in his bronchial tubes. Soon after, the ambulance arrived. Michael was transported to Canton Community Hospital by ground ambulance, and from there he was airlifted by helicopter to Sioux Valley Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Miraculously, my father and sister did not have any major injuries.

Michael spent six long weeks in the hospital. He suffered a broken skull, a broken jaw, broken nose and lost vision in his right eye. Since then, he has undergone numerous surgeries and extensive physical, occupational, and speech therapy.

The day following the accident, my uncle and I went down the road a few miles to look at the accident scene. The grassy ditch squished under our feet as we walked about trying to visualize the events of the day before. The deformed tractor was sitting on the yard of a nearby farm place. There were a few pieces of debris scattered around the accident scene. Not much else. WAIT. There was something else. Something I will never forget. Next to the fence line, was a small imprint in the soft, soggy soil. The imprint was round and few inches deep. It reminded me of a bowl that someone had stomped in the ground. The imprint was splattered with blood.

As I stood there, staring at the blood-sprinkled indentation, our previous complaining came to mind. It was the rain, the rain we had complained about, that God used to keep my little brother alive. If God had not sent the rain, the ground would have been rock hard and Michael's head would have been crushed by the weight of the tractor. Our father in heaven was softening the earth with showers for a purpose. Granted, this might not have been his only purpose, but it displays the absolute sovereignty of an awesome God! Praise be to HIM! Psalter 373 vs. 3 and 4 puts the contents of this essay to song so succinctly:

*I know that the Lord is almighty,
Supreme in dominion is He,
Performing His will and good pleasure
In heav'n and in earth and the sea.*

*His hand guides the clouds in their courses,
The lightning flames forth at His will,
The wind and the rain He releases
His sov'reign designs to fulfill.*