

# MARK'S REMARKS

A few days ago, while listening to a prayer, the following words of gratitude were offered, *“Thank you Lord for adding another day to our lives.”* Those words are still resonating and are triggering thoughts of the past. Let me share three.

Back in June of 1971, my two brothers and I were riding bikes along Highway 75 heading south out of Sioux Center, in the vicinity of where M.J.'s (gas station) stands today. I was on the same bike as my oldest brother Brad and my other brother Jim was riding his bike a few feet behind us. Suddenly, a commotion occurred behind Brad and me and subsequent conversations and investigations would reveal Jim, merely ten years old, had been struck and killed by a car driven by a drunk driver. Death occurred only feet behind me on a sunny Wednesday afternoon. Many questions, very few answers I will receive this side of eternity. While there are many facets and emotions to this story, reflecting today causes me to humbly pray, *“Thank you Lord for adding another day to my life.”*

Back in 1974, I was an active 9 year old boy helping dad and brother Brad clean a .22 caliber rifle in the basement of our home. Suddenly, a shot rang out and like a victim of The Rifleman, John Wayne, or Clint Eastwood, I had been shot in the leg. After mom bounded down the stairs, I was rushed to the doctor and afterward to the hospital for observation. Subsequent conversations and inquiries revealed the bullet had ricocheted off the floor, struck my thigh and traveled up the length of my leg. Other than an entry wound, no other damage was inflicted upon me although I'm told mom inflicted some words upon Dad and Brad. The safety provided during this accidental shooting allows me to pray today, *“Thank you Lord for adding another day to my life.”*

Our last destination takes place around 1985. I was driving home and crossing the railroad tracks I had crossed over thousands of times. For 'some reason' I looked over to my right and saw, only a few yards away, nothing but the front end of a speeding Burlington Northern train engine bearing down on me. Instinctively, (self preservation) I punched the car's accelerator and lunged forward enough to spare my life, but not far enough to prevent my car from being totaled. It took the train a mile to stop and after the conductor walked back to the crossing, tears in his eyes, he said something to the effect, *“Son, it didn't look like you were going to make it but suddenly your car surged ahead. You're a lucky young man.”* Not many individuals survive being hit broadside by a train. Would you believe I drove what was left of my car to the farm? Reflecting upon the reality and emotions of this event prompts me to pray, *“Thank you Lord for adding another day to my life.”*

While some events are clearly visible no one fully understands how his/her life is protected and preserved. There are events of which we are completely unaware as *“he orders his angels to protect [us] wherever [we] go.”* (Psalm 91:11) Yet we can know assuredly that the life we have graciously been given will not be a moment more or a moment less than what has been scripted for us. *“Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.”* (Job 14:5) Is that comforting? Is that troubling?

How have you seen God preserving and guarding your life? How is God protecting you at this moment, even in ways that you have never considered? As you reflect, my prayer is you will realize your only hope is in Him and that these simple words will flow from your lips, *“Thank you Lord for adding another day to my life.”*

*“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”* (Ps 90:12)

Pastor Mark