

## A Miracle in the Wolf Mountains

The Wolf Mountains have many stories they could tell us. Great stories that are evidence of God's handiwork, and His relationship with the people of this land. It's my honor to share with each of you just one of those stories; one of the miracles in the Wolf Mountains.

Tracy said "hello" to me the first time many years ago. Later, Tracy, Clarene, and their two children, Mike and Amy, moved back to the Lodge Grass area. Not only were we related, but Tracy and I shared a strong interest in technology. This turned into a series of long phone conversations, sharing ideas, coming up with new ways to use the emerging technologies. We had a blast!

Another thing we talked about a lot during our phone calls and visits was the Lord. At that time Tracy believed in God but didn't want to accept the possibility of having a personal relationship with Him. After many conversations, long and short, it became apparent to both of us that he was not comfortable accepting that he was worth God having a relationship with him.

Like many people, the idea of having a personal relationship with God seemed too farfetched, given their assumptions of not being worthy of God. Over time, Tracy began to be open to the idea that God really loved him and provided a way for us to accept God's forgiveness, and receive His eternal life through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

He started attending First Crow Indian Baptist Church with Clarene, and accepted responsibilities to assist with its leadership and administrative duties. Newton Old Crow was pastor and has a God-led passion for people and the development of their relationship with God. Tracy was thankful to God for Newton's mentoring and leadership.

After Christmas in 1997, we were having another one of our phone conversations, and started talking about what was happening in the church. He really liked helping out the church and had accepted a serious leadership role there.

While we were visiting a thought kept coming into focus in my mind. So, sensing it was the Lord leading me approximately the following was said:

Me: ...That's great Tracy. Hey, have you given any thought to the idea that the absence of a personal relationship with God is not in alignment with the role you now have in the church?

Tracy: Yeppers. Sure have, and I know I need to do something about it.

Me: Well, what can I do to help? Hey, the New Year is right around the corner and that might be a great time to get started with a new relationship with God.

Tracy: Yep, you're right, but maybe it's too busy a time of the year you?

Me: Tracy if you really want to do this I'll drive down to Lodge Grass, pick you up, and we'll go up to Lookout Point and you can accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord in the Wolf Mountains. It's beautiful up there, and I'll be happy to drive from Billings for something so important.

Tracy: Well, I wouldn't want to do this without Newton coming along. He's been a big part of me getting to know God.

Me: Ok, I'll call Newton and see what he says, and call you right back.

Newton could go along, so on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> it was my pleasure to pick up Tracy, then go to the church. We jumped into Newton's truck with him and started toward the Wolf Mountains.

It's important to know that it was an absolutely beautiful morning! Not a cloud in the sky except for a tiny wispy thing trailing in the sky high above the Wolf Mountains, looking down on what was going on below.

It was a bit cold, but it was one of those times when the cold disappears in the warmth of the sun, and with no breeze it begins to bring the hope of spring into your heart. We all had coats, etc., they are essential anytime you venture up into the mountains during the winter.

A little more than halfway up we noticed a few individual snowflakes floating around trying to find where to land. Looking back, we could see that the sky to the south, and all-around Lodge Grass, was still clear and beautiful. Looking up and to the left there were a lot of clouds forming overhead. That was a bit of a surprise. "Where did they come from?" someone asked.

At two-thirds of the way up it started to lightly snow. We even asked where the snow was coming from because the clouds above us didn't look heavy enough for snow.

By the time we were close to Lookout Point it was snowing very heavily. When we stopped the truck on the Point facing toward Lodge Grass we could barely see the front end of the hood of Newton's truck, and the wind was blowing at a speed that seemed crazy. This was turning into a blizzard.

Now people will think of these events in their own way because we can all interpret things differently. For me, the Wolf Mountains welcomed us just fine. They gave us the traction needed to get where we were, and the Lord kept us safe as we inched along its roads to this special place. The problem we faced was in the sky.

Something was there that clearly didn't want us to do what we intended. It was like this storm was intended to keep Tracy from following through with his decision to accept Jesus as his Life and Lord. The three of us just sat in silence for a few moments watching huge snowflakes blasting onto the truck.

For me, it was like the idea to step out of a warm and safe truck into a howling blizzard seemed less and less appealing. If, however, we were going to do this it was time to move. My statement? "Let's move."

So, all three of us rolled out of the truck, into the blizzard and stood together in a small circle just to the right of the truck. To show our unity in purpose we gripped one another's hands as we confirmed what we were doing. No blizzard was going to keep Tracy from accepting Christ once he made the decision to do so.

When we started to pray, and especially while Tracy was talking to the Lord, for me, the blizzard didn't matter. Not the cold driving snow that slapped against our coats and faces, or the howling wind that tried to push us down. We just prayed anyway. Three men together doing what God wanted us to do.

As Tracy asked the Lord to forgive him, and come into him as his Life the wind slowed down, and just the hug snowflakes fell. Three men with tears in their eyes because of the wonderful moment we were sharing.

Ok, we weren't crazy enough to stay out there any longer than necessary. So, when we were finished with our unrushed conversation with God we jumped back into the truck. Amazing how a little place like a truck cab can feel so good to three guys stuffed inside its confines.

Of course, right away Newton started the truck. The engine actually starting was a good sound to hear in those circumstances, and we easily, and very slowly started backing up to head back to Lodge Grass. Already the wind started to further die-down and the snow let up a bit. That was interesting.

Not far down the road the snow began to change to light snowflakes slowly falling, lingering in the air like they wanted to dance together. Gently landing, each in their own place. It was beautiful.

By about halfway down the skies were clear, and it was like nothing ever happened. All around us, nothing but clear skies. It was an experience we would never forget.

When we got back to the church and got out of Newton's truck, if you looked back up in the sky it was clear, with the exception of a one small wispy cloud that was above the Wolf Mountains looking down upon the mountains below.

Think of this story any way you choose. Tracy and I talked about this often. It was never forgotten. We knew that God and His angels in heaven had been with us and rejoiced at the new Life Tracy received that day from God.

We also knew that Satan, with his power of Sin, had commanded the sky over our small place of prayer. For a short time, Satan was trying with great force to stop Tracy from accepting Christ. That old liar and thief didn't want to lose such a special person.

From that day forward Tracy was a child of God. Born again in the Wolf Mountains on Lookout Point. Tracy never waivered from this.

Tracy and I worked together for years, in Billings, across the USA, and in Africa. It is impossible for me to think of another person I've known who has been more faithful to the Lord while navigating the circumstances of this world.

As his time to leave this world approached, Tracy was looking forward to being with the Lord. His only concern was for his family, and what challenges they might face without him. That too he entrusted to the Lord.

Even close to his departure, when he could barely croak out some words, and had very limited movement, it was my privilege to visit with him, Clarene, and Amy by phone from another State. During that conversation Tracy confirmed he was looking forward to Heaven, and absolutely trusted the Lord. He moved his head in a "yes" response and gave us all a thumbs-up. I shall never forget the words he was able to get out of his throat as we ended our conversation. He said, "I love you Harvey".

My prayer remains the same today as then:

“Thank You Lord for letting us know Tracy. Thank you for the love he had for us, and the love we hold in our hearts for him. May Your Holy Spirit gently help us to remember the good times we had together, even as He helps us to let go of the pain of his absence. We know he’s with You, Lord. Thank You God, for Your faithfulness to Your promises to us, and the fulfillment of the same in the eternal Life Tracy now shares with You in Heaven. Thank You Lord for loving us. We love You. In Jesus’ name. Amen”