

Flock Focus- A Life and Death Testimony

*I wanted to share some e-mails from John and Vicki Cameron about the events of this past week in the life of their daughter Ruth and son-in-law Adam. I think they illustrate this truth from another John, John Flavel: **"We need to know that through these troubles, God is performing a work that we would rejoice in if we saw His design."***

From May 23rd - Thank you all for your prayers today. Ruth and Adam will recover, but it was close. Living about a quarter mile from St. John's Hospital, they were near the epicenter of the worst tornado in Joplin's history. Adam and Ruth were thrown from their house. Adam with a compound fractured leg, Ruth with a broken nose and jaw.

I will not go into all the detail now, but Adam's dad called about 6:00 and told us to get to Joplin asap. Seeing pictures on the T.V., we packed a week's worth of clothes and were on the road by 7:15. When we reach Stillwell in southern Johnson County, we could see the clouds 125 miles to the south. We took a back way into Joplin and made it to within a half mile of their home. They had already been



rescued and taken to the makeshift triage area. With virtually no cell service, Vicki and I spent the next four hours trying to find them. At 1:45 a. m. we received a text message from Ruth. "Dad and mom I am ok but I'm in Freeman with a broken nose and jaw". We showed the text to a man at the blockade who let us through to the hospital.

After 20 minutes of trying to find them, we finally heard from Adam's mom Beverly, that both were being transferred to Mercy Hospital in Rogers Arkansas. We made our way to the car and by 3:15 we were finally able to make it to their bed side.

Our thanks to Beverly and Aron who prepared us for what we were about to see. Adam, already having had one surgery, was on heavy doses of pain medicine and was sitting up in bed. Ruth on the other hand, had not been treated yet. It is hard to see your little girl lying in bed, bloody, swollen and in pain. With that said, we know that both of them and all the people of Joplin are in God's hands. At 4:15 Adam was taken for a second surgery. Ruth was taken out of ER to a room where she is awaiting surgery scheduled for 7:00. From X-rays the doctor told us that Ruthie has many facial fractures.

Thank you Pastor Hough for your reminder in your sermon yesterday, that no one is guaranteed, this afternoon, based upon Philippians 1:15 and following.

http://redeemer-pca.org/sermons/?sermon_id=198

Feel free to call, if we can, we will answer. Thanks for all the prayers. This morning I may return to Joplin to see if there are any personal items that could be salvaged. The house is gone!

Love,
Vicki and John

From May 24th
Greetings to all,

In my favorite musical of all times, Fiddler on the Roof, Tavia assigns a litany of quotes from Holy Scripture to Abraham and is quickly corrected by the Rabbi's son. One of the Scriptures is from Exodus 2:22. "I am a stranger in a strange land" to wit, "That was also from Moses." Well, Vicki and I, Ruth and Adam & Aron and Beverly are all strangers in this strange land of northwest Arkansas.

Praise God for his blessings and provisions during this challenging time. Both Ruth and Adam continue to make progress in their recovery. I do need to correct one statement from yesterday's e-mail. There was more wrong with Ruthie then we first realized and so it was decided to put her surgery off for a couple of days. Ruth sustained a concussion which prevented her medical team from putting her under general anesthesia. In addition her face is quite swollen and they need the swelling to go down before they will operate. Dr. Dorthy Mellon believes that by Wednesday or Thursday, Ruth will be ready to have her multiple face fractures corrected.

In this strange land, we were visited by a lady none of us had ever met before, Janet Nelson. Janet is Bethany McGuire's (from Redeemer) aunt, who lives five minute from the hospital here in Rogers. Janet brought a care package of treats and magazines. Bethany had called her and told her about Adam and Ruth and had called me to tell me that Janet and her husband Dale were opening their home to us, to shower, rest or to just come and go as we needed. Janet was just making sure that we understood that the offer was real.

This example along with so many other heartfelt and received messages of comfort has come from so many different areas. Three men from Redeemer and one who moved to Ashton Missouri several years ago, volunteered to come to Joplin today to help in any way possible. Under "normal" tornado situations, we would have taken them up on their offers, but this was not a normal tornado.

I went back to their home yesterday to see if there was anything that could be salvaged. Not one thing was left on their foundation. Aron's brother Mike showed up with a friend of Adam and we spent four hours collecting little items. We found a couple hundred photo's of Adam and his dad fishing, Ruth going to various school functions at SM East and Pitt State and of the two of them together. There were eight fishing rods with lures and other supplies, Adam's truck, cross country and marathon medals and some Christmas decorations which Vicki had given to Ruth and two broken down bicycles. Beyond that, the remainder was all rubbish. When thinking about this, we are reminded that in the end, our stuff and possessions and none of it can we take with us when we die.

There is little to no cell phone coverage in Joplin after the storm. As I drove back to Rogers from Joplin yesterday, I listened to a voice mail box that was nearly full with well wishes and offers of help. Then there was this message from my friend Doug Oatman of Oatman Photography. He had heard through the grapevine about Adam and Ruth. Doug had done an outstanding job of taking over 500 pictures of Ruth and Adam's wedding 2 1/2 years ago. Doug promised to find all the digital files and put them on a CD for Ruth and Adam. What a blessing to have friends like this.

As I began writing this at 4:30 this morning, Randy and Trevor, Facilities Technicians from the hospital walked into where I was typing. After a short introduction of why I was where I was, I discovered that Ruth and Adam's story has quietly made it around to a number of the staff in different departments here in the hospital. Here is the untold story.

Adam and Ruth were brought in the same ambulance and put in different rooms here in the ER. Adam had been stabilized and was propped up in bed. After about an hour, Adam asked if he could be moved in, next to Ruth and staff quickly accommodated him. It was not long before they were holding hands. Later, Adam was taken off to his follow-up surgery and Ruth was put in a recovery room. After the surgery, Adam was placed two rooms away. When I returned from Joplin, they were in the same room again. I noticed something, as one or the other would reach out for the other to hold hands, the other without saying anything, would do the same. Aron commented that the bond that these two now share, is one that none of us will ever fully understand. I agree.

For those who wish to send Adam or Ruthie an e-mail, Mercy Medical Center provides the following link to do so.

<http://www.mercy4u.com/patientinfo/email/>

The care has been outstanding and we are unable to express our gratitude for the overwhelming love and support which we have all received.

Nothing has been more encouraging to me, then when I walked in to see Ruthie for the first time yesterday. Ruth struggles to speak but with skills developed as a teacher, she does not have to see what she is writing, to write. After all, she has to keep her eyes on little Johnny in the back of the class. So as I was weeping, she wrote, *"God only gives us what we can handle. I can handle this!"* We hope that all who hear of this story will see that we are trusting in God's providence and that through this situation, that God will be glorified.

If I get some time, I will tell you the story about the ruby red slipper that I found in the rubble on Jackson Street yesterday.

Please do not forget to pray for all the others in and around Joplin who have suffered loss and injury!

Love to all,
Vicki and John