



Faith in a Snowdrift

by Jean Easley

An evangelist's life was never easy in those days, but probably was it never any more difficult than during the rationing of World War II. Cross-country travel was reserved mostly for commercial transporters and the wealthy. But Brother and Sister Everett Thompson lived by faith. Their old '36 Chevy would take them from meeting to meeting and home again in spite of the fact or maybe because of the fact that they had more prayers than money. In the leanness of the time, it was not at all unusual for one to be down to his last few coins. It was certain that they were not in the ministry for the money.

The year was 1943, and the Thompsons had held some good meetings in northwest Arkansas. Many were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. After the meetings concluded, Bro. and Sis. Thompson and baby Ordell set out for home across the prairies of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado. It was at Hugo, Colorado, over their meal that they debated whether to head out west again toward the ominous and stormy-looking horizon, which promised snow and trouble. But, feeling the need to be home, they started out.

Poor families couldn't buy tires in those days because of the war, so they improvised with every kind of patch and boot you could think of (and some you couldn't) to keep the car going. Still, every so often there would be another flat tire. Patches were cut from old tires and were many times bolted to the flat on either side of a hole to form a bridge over the hole. By re-inflating the tube inside, you were good for a few more miles, though the ride was a bumpy one.

As they drove toward home, the temperature dropped and the storm met them head on. The snow began to blow harder and harder. The blizzard quickly created drift after drift of snow several feet high across the highway. Traffic thinned out until the Thompsons found themselves quite alone in the snowstorm on one of the worst stretches of the eastern Colorado plains for incapacitating blizzards.

As though the storm were not bad enough, the engine suddenly died. It just quit. Try as he might and even with setting pieces of rubber on fire to keep himself warm as he worked under the hood of the car, Bro. Thompson could not nudge that engine to life again. It was just dead. No amount of patching could solve this problem.

Back in the car, mother and baby were cold, too. As darkness approached, the prospects of spending the night here were overwhelming. What were they going to do? As he contemplated how to keep the car warmer for his family, Bro. Thompson remembered the candles.

At home while preparing for the journey, the evangelist had requested his wife to pack some candles in their things just in case they were needed at some of the places where they would be staying. Most homes had kerosene lanterns, but there were not always enough lamps to accommodate an entire household at the same time. Thus, a few 12-inch candles might just come in handy along the way. So, Sis. Thompson had dutifully packed five of them, which seemed quite a surplus at the time.

Now, the candles came out of the trunk along with a tin coffee cup. By cutting the candles one by one into three or four-inch segments and fixing them to the inside bottom of the cup with a little melted wax, the family could finally have a little heat. In fact, that burning, solitary candle provided enough heat inside that air tight automobile that father, mother, and baby were able to survive that terrible blizzard all night and far into the following day as the snow continued to fall and winds continued to blow. One flickering flame of a little piece of candle in their world of darkness, stranded, all alone except for one another and the Lord... One little flame of a candle, provided in advance by the hand of the Almighty, was their key to survival.

By noon the next day, only one small piece of candle remained. Though they didn't know how, the Thompsons realized that they must find help soon.

About that time Bro. Thompson detected the seeming explosion of a snowdrift far down the highway. Then another exploded sending wafts of snow hurling into the wind. A big, black Cadillac was taking down one drift, then another. It soon stopped next to the little snow-covered Chevy. The driver and three passengers were headed for Hugo.

When the man asked Bro. Thompson his state, he anxiously told him that he had a woman and a child in the car and that they had been there since mid-day the day before. He asked if the stranger might help him get his wife and child to Hugo to get help. The man waved a friendly hand to Sis. Thompson and

the baby and motioning toward the car said, "Get outta there!" Faces blackened by soot from the all-night candle burning, mama and baby happily emerged from the Chevy.

A less powerful automobile would not have been able to get through the huge snowdrifts back to Hugo, and even the big Caddy finally encountered one that was too much for it. When it became stuck fast, the three big male passengers got out and pushed it out of the snowdrift, thus completing a wonderful rescue by a rich man with a big, black Cadillac and his three companions.

In the safety and warmth of the hotel that night, the family waited for daybreak when someone would be able to go out with them and repair their disabled car. Mother Nature had not been very nice, but how good the real true God had been! How merciful and loving and kind!

Bro. Thompson said, "We don't like to go through these things, but God uses them later to take us through the hard times we encounter along life's way. Many times our faith was strengthened when we remembered how God brought us through that snowstorm and that if He did it then, He could do it again."