

Surrendering ...by Lorelei Pepe

I've been in a few car accidents in my lifetime, but the worst one was when I moved to Miami, Florida and was working for a real estate developer in the downtown area. I was his "right-hand" gal and personal secretary and the only employee. He was a millionaire and trusted me with his personal bank accounts and financial papers.

One morning he asked me to bring some financial papers over to his lawyers in the Gables, another wealthy area of Miami, about 20 minutes away. I was terrible at navigating and had to use a street map to find my way. In those days, cell phones were not around and I was scared to death, as I kept going around and around in circles. I was afraid to let him know that I really did not want to go, but really needed this job. I was also exhausted as I had been packing all week long to move to another place with my husband at the time. He was always working so I had to handle most of the packing and it was getting to be overwhelming!

I had driven around a circle in the Gables two times and then while waiting at a stoplight I decided to look at the map again, however it slipped off my lap and fell on the floor. The light turned green and the long line of cars ahead of me started to move, as I did, but just a few seconds later, the car in front of me slammed on his brakes and my car crashed into his car and my teeth hit the steering wheel, even though I was wearing a seat belt. I can still feel the impact today as I slammed into the wheel and broke all my front teeth, in fact some went into my gums. The guy in front of me, jumped out of his car, not happy, inspected his car (minor damage) and then looked at me, as I was then bleeding from the mouth. As I was crying, he called the police and paramedics and then took off after we exchanged information. The paramedics arrived and put ice packs on my mouth and since my knee was swelling up, insisted that I go to the nearest hospital. But I was terrified to leave my husband's "prized" yellow Ford Mustang! He had a temper and I knew he would be fuming, as it had minor damage too, but it was drivable. So, one of the policemen had me follow in my car to the hospital, as I was totally dazed and lost at this point. They checked me out and released me.

I had called my boss and he came with a friend who later drove my car home as my boss took me in his car. He insisted and was upset, but yet so very kind. When I got into my apartment, still with the ice packs on my mouth, I called my husband and my dentist. My husband was screaming on the other end of the phone and I started to cry again as all he cared about was his car!! I just hung up and choked back tears and drove immediately to the dentist. I was so angry at this time that I did not even feel pain. I was numb from his reaction too. Our marriage had been deteriorating for months and this did not help at all. I thought to myself, this was the final straw!

So the dentist did emergency surgery and after hours of being there, I left with temporary front teeth. On the way out of the dentist's office my mom showed up! My husband couldn't leave work he had told her, so she came to comfort me and she certainly did as I ran into her arms and cried again.

When I arrived home, I was alone as my husband was working a double shift as a security guard, so I just sat on the couch and crumbled into pieces and dissolved into a sea of tears. It seemed like hours, as it was getting dark and then I just looked up to God and said **“I can’t do this anymore, Lord. Please, please help me! Show me the way out of this mess.”** Then I just got down on my knees and prayed.

I was at my lowest point in my life and needed to give it all to God. I needed to surrender the hurt, the pain and the emptiness I felt deep inside. I felt so lost. I asked the Lord to help me feel not so burdened and to help me carry on. And that night when I got ready for bed, I could almost hear God whisper to me, **“I am with you always, you are not alone, trust in Me and have faith. Give Me your pain.”** And I did. It took a long time, but I got myself together, had some counseling, lost weight and managed to get my confidence back. I had felt like a failure for a long time. I divorced my husband after a long struggle, but God gave me the confidence to get out of a verbally abusive marriage.

It seems like a lifetime ago today, when I think back to that incident. But I will never forget the night I cried to the Lord and surrendered to Him. It was then that I felt His presence, He rescued me, and helped me endure and persevere during those tough times. I realized I did not have the love of my ex-husband but My Lord loved me and always will.

I believe true transformation can occur when you trust and put your faith in our Lord and remain faithful even in the midst of persecution. As it says **in Psalm 118, “The Lord is on my side, I will not fear: what can man do to me? And the Lord is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.” AMEN!**