

Sunday, June 10, 2007

## The Lord Is My Battery

If you have some time right now, spend a day with me...well not a full day, but part of one. Yeah, it's a long blog...but...well, tough it out...you either have time or you don't. 😊 But it all ties together.

Last Wednesday was a great day, even though it started with a wake up call I didn't ask for. I had a partial day off from one of my part-time radio jobs, and it was my plan to wake up around Noon and get active on some errands. (No, folks, that's not sleeping in...I get off work at 3am during the week, and am usually asleep by 4am.)

Well, that plan of running my errands got started earlier than expected when I got a phone call at 9:20am. My other part-time gig is with Sporting News Radio, and my phone rang with a number I didn't recognize. It was my boss, who left me a voicemail reminding me to bring in or fax in my timesheet some time today. Oh. Yeah...I want to get paid. That's brilliant. I should do that.

But this call started the kind of chain of events that make me point to the sky and say, "I see You working."

I decided to drive in the time sheet (because I don't have access to a fax machine), but first went to Panera Bread to start off my day with a yummy sandwich and some Bible study. So I sat there listening to a great podcast of Alistair Begg with my Bible open and taking notes, and a guy at a table across from me pulled out a book titled "Beware Of Seducing Spirits." I found that interesting but didn't comment. A few minutes later, I looked up and he asked me, "Are you a pastor?" indicating my taking of notes. I said, "No, I'm just a student of the Word. Maybe some day." He asked, "Where do you go to church?"

I told him the schedules of my radio jobs aren't conducive to my getting to Sunday morning services consistently, and I'm still in search of a church home. I asked him where he went and he told me "Hope Chapel" and the city. I told him my friend Lara goes there. (I could fill up a blog about Lara...she's the bomb-diggity Christian sister...(not "Sister Christian," I don't want to get that Night Ranger song stuck in your head. Too late? Sorry.)

I rise and introduce myself to this man, who is James. He sits at my table and we start rappin'. (Now, when I was a youth, before rap and

hip-hop got big, "rappin'" was slang for just having a conversation. Wow...I'm old.) During the early part of our talk my phone alarm goes off telling me it's Noon. Who cares. I am deep in discussion with a Christian brother, and we are all over the place, but it's great. I tell him about my desire to become a stronger disciple, and about my upcoming major road trip (blog about that coming SOON). We end up having a fantastic dialogue, speaking strong words of encouragement to each other on a few issues. We actually wrap up the conversation twice, only to start up again. My alarm goes off again. It's 1pm. We've been talking for an hour. I tell him how funny that is...that if I hadn't been woken up early and come here, I would have never met him. And the alarms that are going off are the ones that would be waking me up and getting me out of the house to my errands.

Gee, it's almost like the Lord intended us to meet there that morning! And it gets better.

James and I swap contact info. After he leaves I finish my podcast (thinking that we should have spent a moment in prayer together, but....) I decide instead of driving in my time sheet, I'll pop across the street to Staples and see if it's cheap enough to use their self-service fax machine. If it's under \$2, I'll do that. So I start my car and head over there. I go in, fax it, done.

Now, my car is over 6 years old, has 140k on it, and I'm going to put it through the paces this summer. I often take naps in my car, anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour. And since I often do this with the stereo on low, I've been planning to get my battery replaced for the last couple weeks. Today, in fact, is one of the days that it's on my list of errands. I exit Staples, get in my car—you can see this coming, of course. Key in, turn...nuthin. Like REALLY nuthin. NO lights, NO sound, nada.

My first thought was a mish-mash of "How funny, it's my battery!" and "Oh no, I hope it's not my starter or something worse." I pop the hood, check connections, get back in, and retry. Some lights, and a click, but no juice. Promising, I guess. I call my roommate John and ask him to come give me a jump. (I could call AAA, but I live like 6 blocks from this Staples.)

Now, lots of people would be frustrated, and I felt a tinge of that. But mostly, I thought it was funny. Because I figured it was just my battery, and I'd been talking about replacing it for weeks and it was one of the errands I was going to run today or Friday. (I actually

looked up at the sky laughing and said, "I was gonna do it!") And the reason I see it as the Lord's Providence is because had I not been awakened early, I might have been much further away from home running errands or turning in my time sheet when the car died, instead of having met James. And also, had I not decided to fax in the time sheet and had instead driven to Santa Monica to turn it in, my car would not-have-started much further from home. Because, you see, it died in the parking lot outside of Staples, a mere 200 yards from the Pep Boys and Firestone where I was going to take it to get the battery replaced!

So while he is on the way, I say a few prayers over the car (yes, yes, I did...all of you friends who think, "Wow he IS a spiritual freak"...well, more and more, yeah I am). John shows up, we jump the car. Just as we get it started, and I'm telling him my gauges and lights are flickering so I want to leave it connected for a few minutes, a guy walks by and says, "Five minutes." I say, "Thanks!" He says, "God Bless!" I reply with the same.

We charge the car for five minutes, and I drive it over to the Pep Boys. Now, I got my brakes done there a month ago, and it took forever. I expected it would take too long again this time, but wanted to check the pricing anyway. I had already intended to also check at Firestone which is a mere 100 feet across the parking lot. I walk into Pep Boys, and there is one guy behind the counter who is also on the phone and one guy waiting to be served. I stand there for a couple minutes, notice a handful of people in the service waiting area, and I can feel the spirit of impatience beginning to work on me. I decide not to let it. I'm not going to stand there and get peeved about how long I'm standing there, and then have to swallow that frustration when I finally get my turn to talk to the guy. Plus, I'm anticipating being told it will take an hour, and then that will turn into 2-3 hours.

So I leave and head over to Firestone. They are nearly empty, and the guy behind the counter, JP, gets off the phone and quotes me a fine price for my battery, right in my budget (\$107) and tells me it can be done in 30-45 minutes. Great, sold. I sit down with my iPod and begin listening to another podcast.

JP then calls my attention and apologetically tells me it's going to be longer than expected and cost more than he quoted me. Why? Because my 2000 Dodge Stratus has a strange location for the battery, and to replace it they need to remove the front driver's side fender. Oh yeah...I remember reading about that online. Drat. Oh well,

I cannot complain. I should have remembered that. And the car has served me well over the years and I won't ever be replacing the battery again.

Instead of staying there for an hour and half, I decide to walk home, which takes me about 20 minutes. The podcast ends just as I open my front door. I relax and hit the web for a short while and my phone rings. It's JP from Firestone. My car is done. Uh, ok. Great! I expected it to be another hour or so. John drops me off and I pay and sign and am back in my car. (I forgot to question JP as to why the cost was still significantly more since it didn't take much longer than originally expected...so I may have ended up getting overcharged...but after the fact I wasn't going to complain. Maybe I'll stop by there this week and check into it.)

Nothing specific or important happened the rest of the day...but for me, it was great to feel the presence of the Lord in all of it. It was comforting to know that it all worked out, and that I could rely on the peace He gives me to battle impatience and frustration in situations over which, in the past, I would easily have been dramatic and unnecessarily frustrated.

Being awakened early wasn't fun, but I decide to start the day over a meal with the Lord and He blessed that with the contact with James. The encouragement James gave me, and the discussion we had about not meeting had I not been awakened early, carried over into my attitude when my car wouldn't start. Because I was thankful it lasted as long as it did, and grateful that I was local enough to get it resolved without much hassle.

God Is Good, People. The Lord is my battery...he energizes me and sustains me. He keeps my lights bright and gauges operational, he gets me started and he keeps me going. And I'm not talking about my car.