

## What Goes Around Comes Around

Screech....! The speeding car crashed into a huge oak tree with a loud bang. The air was impregnated with black fumes indicating a possible explosion. Not very far from the scene of the accident, Naresh, and his father Raghu were working on their farm. They witnessed the mishap from a distance. Naresh said to Raghu, "Father! There may be people still alive in the car. Let us not delay lest the car explode into pieces." They rushed to the spot and were flabbergasted to see the flames beginning to envelop the car. They were trying to see if there was anyone inside when Raghu noticed a man. He said to Naresh, "There is a man inside, we must rescue him." Naresh seemed to disagree and said, "It's too late! The flames have picked up speed, the car may explode any moment and in all probability the man you saw must be dead. No one could have survived this crash." Raghu was determined and didn't pay heed to Naresh's warning. He yanked the door open. Naresh also rushed to the aid of Raghu and they managed to pull the man out of the ravaged vehicle. No sooner had they moved a few yards from the vehicle than it exploded into bits, its spare parts all over the place. Naresh exclaimed in shock, "A few seconds late and we would have been pulp!" Raghu checked the man's pulse, he was still alive. "Quick! We need to rush him to the hospital," he said to Naresh. Naresh quickly started his bike and they rushed the man to the hospital.

At the hospital he was immediately admitted to the I.C.U. The doctor examining the case came forward and explained the situation. He said, "The man is very critical and needs to undergo an operation immediately. Here is the bill, please make the necessary payments as soon as possible. Naresh and Raghu stood shell shocked and looked at each other. Naresh wanted no more part in this whole Good Samaritan act and said to his father, "The amount is too much, we cannot arrange such a huge sum. Sooner or later someone will come looking for him and find him." Raghu retorted angrily, "Yes, and they will find him dead, as the operation will never take place because of lack of funds." Naresh replied, "Father, be realistic we can never arrange this money. I spoke to the staff, who couldn't get any details about his man either; his phone was also destroyed in the crash." Raghu reluctantly agreed with Naresh and said, "Come son, let's go home. It is your mother's birthday and we are already late." Naresh amusingly replied, "Oops ! I almost forgot about it

On their way out, Raghu still sulking and feeling much remorse about abandoning the man knew something had to be done to save the man, but he did not have the means. Naresh did not like the sight of his father sulking in this manner and told him to cheer up; after all it was mother's birthday. All of a sudden, out of the blue, Raghu's face lit up "Eureka !! I know what I must do," he exclaimed and ran as if possessed by demons. Naresh could not surmise where he was off to but followed. Suddenly, Naresh found himself at the door of the notorious moneylender Rajan, and his father Raghu was inside pleading for a loan. Rajan seemed delighted to have Raghu at his mercy and was trying to make the most of this opportunity to exploit him. Rajan said, "The sum of money you are asking is huge. You will have to keep your land as an assurance. Also you must be aware the interest rates have shot up almost ten times as much." Naresh barged his way inside and shouted, "That's a lie ! You fraud! We don't want any deal with you. Come on father. Let's go!" But Raghu stood his ground. "Okay, I'll strike the deal, give me the money," he told Rajan, who was extremely delighted. Naresh again pleaded with Raghu, "Father you can't be serious, all this for an unknown stranger." However, Raghu had made up his mind and he was not going to budge.

Raghu and Naresh rushed to the hospital with the money and completed the necessary formalities. At home, Lakshmi, the wife of Raghu, waited anxiously. On seeing the two approaching she was delighted and had cooked a lovely meal. She greeted them and told Raghu, "Dear, I'm sure you have got some birthday surprise for me! No wonder you have been delayed." Naresh muttered, "Boy ! Does he have a surprise!" Raghu narrated the incident and all hell broke loose. Lakshmi sent them both to sleep out in the barn, without even their meal. The two of them lay on the straw looking at the stars and pondering the extraordinary events of the day. Raghu smiled at Naresh and said, "Son, whatever has happened and whatever may happen, I can't deny that I feel peculiarly happy."

The next few days, the two of them visited the patient. The operation was successful, however he was unconscious. One day as they arrived at the hospital, they discovered that he had been discharged and left and no one had any information about him. It was sheer agony for Raghu. Though he was delighted at the recovery of the man, he was traumatized by the fact that it was almost certain he would lose his land.

Raghu pleaded with Rajan the moneylender, to give him some more time, to enable him to arrange the money. Rajan was relentless and was keen on acquiring Raghu's land, since it was one of the most fertile lands. Apart from that his boss, Mr.Siddharth, who was in the adjoining room would be very pleased with this acquisition. Raghu was devastated and about to leave, when Mr.Siddharth covered in bandages and bruises stepped into the room. He wasn't pleased with Rajan. He said to him, "Rajan, there are too many discrepancies in these accounts." He noticed Raghu and asked who he was. Rajan mockingly narrated to Mr.Siddharth the account of how the foolhardy Raghu, tried to save an anonymous man and ended up losing his property.

Mr.Siddharth stopped Raghu, to the astonishment of Rajan, and said, "Do you not recognize me ?" Raghu said he didn't. Mr.Siddharth said, "I was on my way from the station when I lost control of my car. You saved my life! I am indescribably grateful to you. I could never repay you." Raghu replied, "Sir! I do not want anything; please give me my land back." Mr.Siddharth delighted at the simplicity of Raghu said, "Of course you will have your land. I will give you an additional area of land belonging to me. Also your son, Naresh, will be employed with me from tomorrow. As for you, wicked Rajan, your services are no longer needed." Rajan went away dejectedly. Mr.Siddharth, then looking a little puzzled asked Raghu, "You could have saved yourself a lot of trouble by not helping me. Why did you help me?" Raghu replied, "If it was anyone I would have done it. It was the right thing to do. I dread living with a conscience reminding me that I did nothing but just watched a man die."

- Story by Wesley D'costa s.j.