

# Demolition Derbies, Fire Extinguishers, and Your Soul's Salvation

By adminlen On September 10, 2013 · Add Comment

The other night I went to my first ever demolition derby. Having seen them on TV in the past, I have to say I didn't have very high expectations of a good time, but I wasn't there for fun, anyway. I was there on behalf of the fire department, to provide fire control if needed. Now, my understanding was that fires are pretty rare at these things, strange as it seems. After all, 4000 pound vehicles slamming into each other at speed, trying to knock out each others' tires, radiators, ability to steer or move, etc., would naturally tend to spilling gasoline all over hot engines and fires would ensue with great frequency. Or so one would think. But whether it is due to the way the cars are put together to protect vital parts, or simply the nature of the way they run into each other, I'm not sure...it just doesn't happen often, I guess.

Now, I'm thinking that's probably the reason these folks aren't too afraid of catastrophe. They've made provision, they've got safety cages, helmets, harnesses, braces, and other safety equipment tucked away in all the proper places. They've thought through this, they have a plan, and they're pretty sure that even if the car is unrecognizable when it's all over, they're going to walk away needing little more than a chiropractic adjustment or a massage.

So, back to this particular derby. As it happened, there were two fires that night. I helped put out the first one, and put the second out by myself. We used fire extinguishers (neither fire was that big), and it really was kind of



exhilarating running across the area in full turnouts carrying a 40 or 50 pound extinguisher hoping that all the other drivers had noticed that they were supposed to stop driving around backwards due to the fire flag that was being swung around in the darkness by an official. A couple of blasts from the extinguisher, and the fun was over. The drivers thanked us, and we went back to being onlookers who were seriously overdressed for the weather. And, by the way, it really was fun to watch.

One other important detail: on the second fire, which pretty much engulfed the guy's engine compartment, I arrived at the car in all my gear, with a huge extinguisher, looking very much as if I knew what I was doing (!). The driver of the car, excited about everything as you could imagine, crawled out of the window holding a fire extinguisher, too. His was about the size of a can of hairspray, and just about as effective. He was trying to help, you see. Understandable, since he obviously had a lot of money tied up in this, uh, piece of metal that used to be a car. But he was no help whatsoever, and was mostly in the way. Nevertheless, he squirted away with abandon as I was blasting the fire with foam. (Admittedly, had I been in his position, I probably would have done the very same thing!)

It wasn't until Sunday morning that a spiritual lesson from all of this broke into my mind, while talking about the event with some folks from church. Sin is a lot like a demolition derby in some ways: people making preparation to do things that may be fun at the time but ultimately are destructive, trying to cheat the laws of physics and flirt with danger just for the thrills. They make lots of preparations – even carrying those little fire extinguishers – but in the end the cars still look like pretzels. And some catch on fire.

Now here's the incredible part of this little story. When it comes to salvation, fallen man is just like that driver with the little fire extinguisher. I suppose that if there were no other resources available, the fire extinguisher would have to be used. But when you've got a fully equipped firefighter standing there, why would you think that anything you could do would help? Without putting anything on that particular driver the other night, that's fallen man through and through when it comes to the One who saves His people from their sins. Man wants to help. Wants to add his own puny works into the equation. Wants to think he has something to offer to put the fire out and avert disaster. Wants to think, after he's been crashing around in settled determination to do as much damage as possible, that now he's to be regarded as capable because he brought a squirt bottle to a forest fire. And all the while getting in the way of the One who has the real answers and ability to truly rescue him, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me" ([John 14:6](#)). All of our works are "like a polluted garment," the Bible says ([Isaiah 64:6](#)). There's no work of righteousness that we have done that can deliver us from the catastrophe of God's just judgment upon our sins. Only His mercy can save us as He looks upon the finished work of Christ and sees in it the satisfaction of the punishment required for rebellion against His law.

So, let's put away our puny little fire extinguishers. We cannot add to the salvation that Christ brings to His own. And don't even think about getting back in that car. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).