



FROM MIKE COONEY & THE KEEPERS OF THE VINE

FEBRUARY 2010

Thanks Mate!

Do you ever have times when nothing ever seems to go right? When your cunning plans end up turning to custard? When no matter how hard you try, how loud you pray or how much you swear under your breath, things still don't work out the way you want?

I have those times. Actually, it seems I *often* have those times! Like, for example, when I recently took a young mate hunting for three days. I was foolishly wearing new boots, and by the time we made the four hour hike to the hut in the dark, I could barely walk. The next morning I woke up with the worst blisters I've ever seen. I literally couldn't walk - honestly! So I spent the whole day hut-bound, while my young friend hunted solo.

Then (it gets worse!), after staggering back out to the truck the next day, I found that some low-life had slashed all my tyres - and it was an hour to the nearest town! Thankfully, a very obliging hunter offered to take us in so I could find a tyre shop. Except it was a Sunday ... and after five.

By some miracle, I found someone who came and opened up his shop, and sold me four second-hand tyres and rims. I got a lift back out to my truck and arrived an hour later with

my new wheels ... only to find out I didn't have a wheel jack. After a bit of jimmying around, we finally managed to get a slashed wheel off ... only to find the new one didn't fit. In fact, *none* of them fit!

Then it started to rain.

Once again, I managed to get ride into town, where I noticed a tow-truck which I promptly flagged down. After a bit of persuasion, he agreed to take me back to my truck and tow it. By the time we arrived at my crippled vehicle, it was pitch black and raining heavily, and the 'towey' wasn't even sure whether my truck would fit on the back. Thankfully, it did.

Once back in town, I got the tyre-shop-man out of bed and down to his shop, and had him (*now bear with me ...*) take the tyres I'd bought off his rims, take my wheels off my truck, take the slashed tyres off my rims, put his tyres on my rims and the wheels back on my truck. (*Phew!*)



lift into town ... the tyre shop owner I got out of bed ... the tow-truck driver on his way home to his family ... and the fact I *didn't* run out of gas - or get gangrene in my feet!

There are plenty of other things to be thankful for too. Like when Grapevine's finances showed a big shortfall last year, hundreds of supporters dug deep - despite the recession - and gave generously. So **THANK YOU for your support in 2009!** Our Xmas Appeal for \$43,000 went beyond our expectations - we raised in *excess* of that. Which has meant that we're starting this year excited - with the resources needed to do the best job we possibly can!

It was nearly midnight when we finished and I was shattered. The fuel light was on, so I pulled into a gas station to fill up. It was pre-pay, so I handed over \$50 for my gas, jumped back into my truck and started the long drive home. About 30 minutes into it, I noticed my fuel light was still on ... and it dawned on me. In trying my hardest to walk properly in public (remember the blisters?), I'd handed over my money and driven off without ever filling up!

By some miracle (yes, another one!) I found another gas station still open 15 minutes later. I was running on fumes, but I'd made it. At some time after 2am, I finally got home - and for the first time since leaving the hut early the previous morning, I pulled off my boots to reveal the carnage.

To wrap it up, I rang my insurance company the following day to see what expenses I could recover ... which amounted to nothing (the downside of paying cash). They did, however, tell me I should've rung a tow-truck straight away and got them to take me *and* my truck home. And ... they would've paid for it!

Now, I've got lots of stories like this - I have a gift! And it's easy to get lost in the negativity, and lose sight of things to be thankful for. Like the hunter who gave us a

It's nice to be reminded that there are plenty of Kiwis throughout the country who believe in what we do, and are partnering with us to help inject fun, hope and wholeness into New Zealand families. There's plenty to be thankful for, and in 2010 we promise to keep on delivering more brilliant, helpful, fun-filled, inspiring mags - with your help of course!

Please don't forget to continue your support - and keep giving. We need this sort of generosity each month if we're to exploit Grapevine's potential and reach *more* struggling Kiwi families than ever.

So please send in your \$50 ... \$100 ... \$500 ... \$1000 ... (whatever!) donation for Jan/Feb as soon as poss. As Dad keeps saying ... **"Every dollar counts!"**

Thanks again!

Mike ...

