

THE BLIZZARD CATASTROPHE

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastics 3:1-8

There is a state law in Texas that requires everyone to live within ten miles of a Dairy Queen. I am not complaining about this mandate because I enjoy a good dose of ice cream and a greasy hamburger as much as anyone. It is also beneficial because there is never any danger of starving to death while traveling across the state. You always know there is a DQ in the next town, regardless of its size.

Several years ago, Dairy Queen invented one of the greatest food items of this century --- the Blizzard. A Blizzard is a cup of ice cream with a bunch of good stuff, i.e. fruit, candy bars, cookies, etc., stirred in. It is a very tasty treat that has smoothed the road for many weary travelers.

Whenever you purchase a Blizzard, you can order one from the menu or have one custom made with a favorite candy bar or fruit. I always have strawberries and bananas. It does not require any thought. When the opportunity to eat a Blizzard presents itself, I do not want to experiment, I want a proven flavor.

As a part of the experience, the server always turns the Blizzard upside down in order to demonstrate the thickness of the ice cream. The first few times it is a great trick, but I have eaten enough Blizzards that this act of daring has lost some of its luster.

Jeremy and I were driving through the vast expanse of West Texas, on our way to a church in Midland for a weekend seminar. We both travel with the same intensity. We do not stop for incidentals other than food and other physical necessities. The great idea for a Blizzard hit both of us at about the same time so we began to whet our appetite in anticipation of the next Dairy Queen.

Jeremy was at the wheel and he was the first to spot the large red oval with the familiar logo. He maneuvered the exit ramp from the highway and pulled up next to the drive-in speaker and in the DQ parking lot. We both knew exactly what we wanted so there was no need to study the menu.

I have often wondered why drive-ins do not spend a few more dollars and get a speaker that can be understood. If they would simply tack on a two-cent surcharge to every drive-up order for a month they could pay for a replacement. It is so difficult to comprehend the words that you never know what they will hand you at the window.

We were fortunate. The young lady heard our order for two Blizzards and we pulled up to the window ready for a treat. The treat we received was even better than anticipated. Upon completing the mixtures, the girl opened the window, stuck her arm out and flipped the cup of ice cream upside down.

The entire contents of Jeremy's Butter Finger Blizzard slid out of the cup and landed on the ground next to our car. The young server's face turned as red as the Dairy Queen sign. Jeremy and I did the only appropriate thing --- we started laughing as hard as possible.

Taking a cue from our good-natured response, the embarrassment quickly faded from the girl's face and she too began to laugh. Many times the best way to respond to an apparent catastrophe is to look for the humor. The spilled ice cream broke up the monotony

of our drive through West Texas and it was a much better experience for all us because of the power of laughter.