



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

November 22, 2022

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Scott Vuncannon, An Incredible Snakebite Survival Story

by **Elly Clary**

"I saw a snake head come up and strike my left calf. I pulled my pant leg up and saw two red marks. (My dog) Boone came up and that's when the snake started rattling. It was a rattlesnake about 5.5 feet long."

Scott Vuncannon delivered his dramatic story of being bit by a rattlesnake in 2018 in the North Carolina mountains. He recounted to Charlotte Rotary his miraculous tale of survival alone with only his dog Boone on a rough backwoods trail.

By the time he was rescued and airlifted to an Asheville hospital, about 12 hours had slipped away. Doctors told his wife, Nan, he had a less-than-5-percent chance of survival. But after two weeks in the hospital, one in intensive care, and three months of rehabilitation, he fully recovered.

At a table near the speaker's dais were Nan and the bobtailed Boone, a handsome black and grey Aussie Shepherd who is now six years old.

Scott and Nan live in Monroe and Highlands and he had driven to their mountain house to perform some maintenance. Nan planned to join him later in the day when he texted her he was going to take a hike. He started at 11 a.m. and a couple of hours into his trek, he encountered the rattlesnake.

Immediately, he used his bandana to tie a tourniquet below his knee. But there was no cell phone service.

“My heart sank, but I didn’t panic,” he said. “I started praying. I took about 650 steps before I collapsed and started throwing up.”

With his belt, he applied a second tourniquet around his thigh. He kept his feet below his heart.

“Psalm 23 kept reiterating in my mind,” he said. With his phone, he made a video for his family, slurring to Nan that he loved her.

Meanwhile, miracles were in motion. Nan arrived at their house and found a guidebook Scott had left open to the trail he’d taken. At an outdoor store, she met a lady whose son-in-law was a fire-and-rescue chief.

Rescuers hit the trail by 5:30 p.m. and found Scott around 9:30. His blood pressure was 47 over 28. Though they normally carry just one vial of antivenom, they happened to have six vials with them. They gave him a shot every 15 minutes during three hours of hauling him to the trailhead.

A helicopter spirited Scott to the hospital and he arrived at about 1:30 a.m. “My internal organs had mostly shut down but they slowly were able to bring me back around,” he said.

“I thought I was in control,” he reflected, “but I realized I’m not. The good Lord is in control. The good Lord can get you through whatever you’re going through.”

Scott expressed gratitude to all who helped him, especially first responders.

“I’m 63 years old. I have three grandchildren. We’re getting ready to celebrate Thanksgiving with the family,” he said. “I couldn’t be more thankful and grateful.”

*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/774376974>
The speaker’s introduction begins at 22:50 minutes.