



Disaster on the East River

Nine years after *The Miracle on the Hudson*, tragedy took place on the East River in New York as five lives were lost in a helicopter crash on Sunday, March 11.

The New York helicopter crash that killed everyone on board except the pilot was caused by a series of safety failures. The ill-fated flight had been chartered for a private photo shoot by the five passengers.

The fuel shut-off valve was intended to be a safety feature, but was accidentally engaged during the flight, forcing the helicopter into an emergency landing. The flotation devices were intended to keep the helicopter from sinking, but inflated improperly, causing the craft to flip on its side and quickly take on water.

The harnesses were promoted in advertising to reassure those who might feel skittish about leaning out of an open-door helicopter flight but instead served to trap the five passengers, sealing their tragic fate.

Three separate safety features actually worked together to do exactly the opposite of what they were supposed to do – save lives.

Every year, there are those who attend Easter services believing they are spiritually secure. After all, they call themselves Christians. They were born in a Christian family. They attend services during the important holidays. They try to be good people. They give to charity. They treat others the way they hope to be treated. As they look at all the things they do, they feel they're going to land safe and sound at their eternal destination.

What they don't know is that the very things they're counting on to securely deliver them will end up working toward their demise. That's because their confidence in church membership, church attendance, and their own good deeds can't replace the only real source of salvation – the finished work of Jesus, who died on the cross for our sins and was resurrected on the third day.

What He did assures eternal life, the reward of heaven, for those who establish a relationship with Jesus – obtained by grace through faith in Him as Lord and Savior. The Bible is clear about that. The Apostle Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus, said: *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter