

## Lightning

My father-in-law had won a prize from the Illinois Sport Fishing Raffle in Blue Island, IL. The prize was a beautiful houseboat on Rainy Lake, all expenses paid for one week. Included in the deal were: two fishing boats with motors, gas for all three boats and fuel for the stove and hot water heater. The only cost to us, once on the water, was food and any other personal items we needed.

One afternoon, my dear brother Bill realized that we would not have enough stale beer to make it through the evening poker game. He decided to make a beer run, utilizing one of the out-board boats. I strongly advised against this, for the western sky held the look of incoming storms. As the law in Minnesota requires, the houseboat was tied to an island during the darkness. The only way for Bill to get the beer was via small boat. He noted that there were several islands located between the resort and us. The resort was about five miles away and visible with binoculars. (This beautiful place is now called Voyager National Park. One can see for twenty miles in some directions. The Lord does beautiful work.) Bill, his only son and friend Mike all set out on this trip just before dark.

Well, we were hit with a terrible summer thunderstorm. It ran the gamut of lightning, rain, wind and even some hail. It dawned on me: "How are they going to get back, assuming they make it there in the first place?" I go and find a flashlight. I take it up onto the sunroof of the houseboat, after the storm seemed to have let up and moved on. The sky is still lighting up with lightning off in the distance. I feel safe as I watch the storm continue to pass off to the south and east. I could once again see the twinkle of lights from the resort where they were headed. We had visited that area and it contained nice features: dining room, bar, game room, cottages, boat dock and beach.

As time passed, my arm began to be tired and the batteries were failing. After quite awhile, I do not know how long, the batteries totally died. I left my post in the aluminum-folding chair and climbed down the aluminum alloy ladder with the flashlight in hand.

CRACK! Lightning rocked the entire sixty-foot boat. There was a flash of light and the smell of ozone. We had been hit by a big one! I was mad for a split second and then grateful: grateful first to God and then to the Ever-Ready battery company. The strike had totally melted the chair I had just vacated! (This is like the stories in the magazine Boys' Life where batteries saved peoples' lives. In my case, the story has a twist: the batteries saved me by dying. Praise God!)

Bill Griffiths Jr. really enjoyed the lightning show. According to him, they could see the boat very well as the lightning struck it. "Wasn't that a great act of God helping them find the boat in the dark?" he wanted to know. "I don't know if we would be here without the lightning hitting the boat when it did." That took the words away from me. All things are blessings, thanks be to God.

I returned there five years later in 1986. I went with two of my three brothers and our sons, plus some other friends. There were fourteen altogether. This time we camped in tents as well as on the houseboat. Just remember one thing in this beautiful spot: it is best to be on an island for the bears like to come to the houseboats tied at shore.