



## THE PERFECT PLACE - PART II

Unbeknownst to me the power company had significantly opened the dam a few miles upriver after I'd gone to bed and the water level was eight to ten feet higher and one hundred feet wider on my side of the river.

I tried to recollect where my things were. This isn't an easy task to do in the middle of the night just after one awakens without any lights. It was time for some serious prayer for wisdom.

Praise God I'd put my shoes and socks on a big rock to air out. Praise God I'd hung my sweaty clothes on tree limbs instead of laying them out like usual. Praise God the antenna on my radio was above water. Praise God my pack was on another big rock. Praise God my journal, that is usually beside me on the ground, was in my pack. Praise God I was able to remember where my glasses and water bottle were in the vicinity of where my pillow was because I was as good as blind. I literally had to feel for things and then wade through the water without cutting my feet up in order to get everything to dry land. If I put my shoes on they'd be soaked and blisters would start happening.

By the time I'd gathered everything except my lost flashlight and moved them five feet away from the river, the river had widened that much already. Now the task was to move everything again, this time one hundred feet farther from the river and twenty feet higher up to a moonlit place. I was still naked, but strangely wasn't cold. Six trips were necessary from the wet and dark to the dry and light. It was very difficult going from the light back into the dark to see where I was going or where my things were as they were being swallowed up by the river that I couldn't see. Try it sometime in your home. Go from a well lit

room into a pitch black one barefooted with toys and other things all over the floor for tripping over to find something. And there's a time limit because the things you're looking for will soon disappear. This isn't Fun 101.

Praise God I didn't freeze moving things. Praise God I didn't trip and fall down and bust my head open again. Praise God my feet didn't get injured. Praise God I only lost my flashlight. Praise God I wasn't in my tent as that would have probably been disastrous. Praise God I woke up before it was too late.

I put my clothes and shoes on, prayed, and the words of Jesus Christ (the Son of Man) came to mind from Luke 17:26 - 36:

*"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.*

*"It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.*

*"It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left." (NIV)*

It was such a perfect place. I was



### Sunrise, after my long night's walk

unaware of what was going on in my wonderful dreamland. I could not have imagined the river rising that much in four hours. Not waking up meant death to me. Waking up meant asking for help and then taking some serious action.

I prayed for wisdom to know what to do with a totally wet heavy sleeping bag, air mattress, and most everything else that was damp? Should I wait for daylight and maybe find my lost flashlight? How would I stay warm and not attract attention? Should I walk with only the moonlight, knowing how easily my ankles sprain? If I stayed would I be able to honor my commitments for the following Sunday and still have time to dry my soaked things?

The time (11:40 p.m.) arrived to pack up, without my flashlight, and get moving. I walked the quarter mile back to the highway past the gopher holes, rocks, and sagebrush-heading southwest.

After two hours I arrived at a small, unheated rest area complete with a bathroom, running water, lights, and a picnic table. In between the perfect place and the rest area I crossed a bridge over the Columbia. The river was loud, powerful, and very scary in the moonlight. Praise God I woke up when I did. I stayed at the rest area only an hour and a half because I became chilled. It was 3:10 a.m. and I had to get moving.

I walked till dawn without resting. Never had I walked four hours without taking my pack off or sit-

ting down. If I sat down I might have fallen asleep and had to deal with hypothermia. I almost fell asleep many times during those four hours. The only way to stay warm was walking. For the last three hours the moonlight was gone due to the mountainous terrain and moon set. I prayed for safety, as I was again blind, this time on a road with dangerous shoulders and little traffic to light my way.

Dawn lifted my spirits as sunrise meant warmth and rest. The first rays brought a little warmth and the ability to see clearly. By sunrise I'd walked sixteen miles. The most I'd walked in a day was twenty-nine miles and with sixteen down the record was in sight. Twenty-nine to me is like Joe Dimaggio's 56 game hitting streak in 1941. I hadn't planned walking twenty-nine miles again. The pain walking over twenty-five miles is brutal, but I only had fourteen to go for thirty.

Midday the sun was powerful and I found a bridge in which to hang all my wet stuff up for three hours. If my sleeping bag stayed wet I'd have to walk through the cold night again.

I walked till an hour before dark, and finally reached the thirtieth mile near the outskirts of civilization. Civilization makes it harder to find a safe place because there are more people and less hiding places.

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