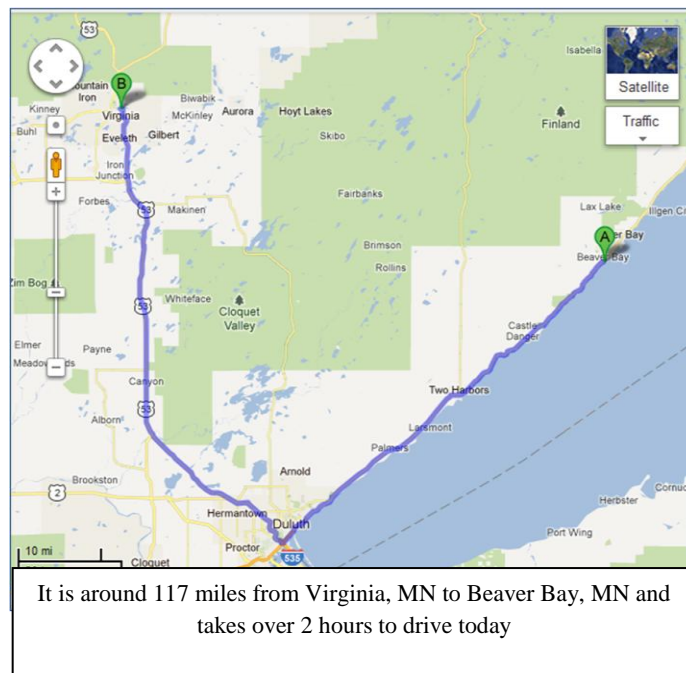


## Dare To Trust the Lord

By Jim Poppenhagen

Throughout scripture and in our own lives, God speaks to us in various ways. Sometimes, when He speaks, it is in a *“still small voice,”* as He spoke to Elijah in 1Kings 19:12. Most of us may never hear His audible voice but we know when God is speaking to us. As we pray and ask the Lord to guide us to do the right thing, carrying out His Divine Will, we may feel an urgency to do something, even if it’s against all odds. We may not know exactly what we’re doing or why we’re doing it, but we know the Lord desires it.

One time that this happened to me was in 1967, immediately after I had accepted the position of pastor at a church in Beaver Bay, MN. My wife Marge and I were still living near Virginia, over 115 miles away. We planned to move to the parsonage by the church that month. As we were driving home after accepting the position, we had a very serious car accident. Marge suffered a compound fracture in her right leg and sustained many other injuries. She was confined to a hospital in Virginia for a month. By the time she was released, we had moved to the parsonage in Beaver Bay and had to drive from our new home 115 miles to Virginia once a week for physical therapy. I spent what money we had on a big, eight cylinder Pontiac to replace the car we lost in the accident. The church couldn’t afford to pay us an income, so within a few months our money was finally gone.



Marge had to go to therapy, but we didn't even have enough money to buy gas and I knew there was almost none in the tank. I checked just to make sure, but as I expected, the tank was nearly empty. Marge needed the therapy, but there was no way to get her to the hospital. I felt so helpless. It was then that I prayed for the Lord's will in the situation. What were we supposed to do? As I prayed, I felt the Lord speaking to me. He assured me that He would provide for our needs, so we got ready to go on the 230 mile round-trip drive. As I pulled out of the driveway, I wondered how far we would go before we ended up on the side of the road. *Ten miles max*, I thought.

As we travelled, I really expected to run out of gas at any moment, but I believed that the Lord would provide help for us once we were stuck on the side of the road. Maybe someone driving along would stop and give us a ride. Maybe someone would give us some gas. I didn't think it mattered how it would happen, I just believed that God would provide for us somehow. So, I kept a steady eye on the gas gauge, waiting for it to be completely empty so God's provision would arrive and help us. But for some reason, the needle in the gauge never changed. It didn't fall or rise and we kept on going.

The miles flew by and I began to think we might make it to Two Harbors before we ran out. *I'm sure the Lord has someone there to help us*, I thought, but when we stopped there for a break, no one came by to help us. *Okay*, I thought, *maybe we're supposed to make it to Duluth*. Sure enough, that empty tank of gas lasted all the way to Duluth. Again, I expected someone to help fill us up there, but no one did. The old car was still running strong so we just kept on driving all the way to Virginia. While Marge had her therapy, I wondered how God was going to provide for us on the way back. We knew a lot of people in Virginia, so I expected to bump into someone we knew who could help us.

When Marge was done with her therapy, we got back into the car, still expecting to meet someone who would offer to put some gas in the car. No one showed up, but the car was still running good, so we decided to set out for home. The gas gauge hadn't moved a millimeter. It still showed a nearly empty tank, but we just kept on going through Duluth and on through Two Harbors.

Before we knew it, we were pulling back into the driveway at our home in Beaver Bay. We had driven 230 miles without using a single drop of gas! *Wow!* I thought, *I might never have to buy gas again!* I put that thought right out of my head and thanked the Lord for showing us how He provides in marvelous and ever miraculous ways, His wonders to perform.

After what we'd been through in the aftermath of the accident, I could certainly have agreed with the Psalmist that *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous,"* and left it at that. However, David goes on to say that *"the Lord delivereth him out of them all"* (Psalm 34:19). This is so

true. In our distress, we called out to the Lord. He heard us and spoke to us. God provided for us when there was no other help. Believers don't always escape having to experience afflictions in the world, but ultimately, God delivers us from them all through the Blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord and King. Amen.