

Miracles that follow the plow :: The Buck Hunt

The Buck Hunt - posted by Ravenbrook (), on: 2009/4/18 22:41

The Buck Hunt

When my second oldest daughter was about sixteen she was being impressed by some of the wrong people in her life and dad (that's me) was a little concerned. I had worked very hard to keep my testimony clean, especially with my family. I was afraid my daughter was going to become another statistical victim of institutional Christianity. You know the type, show up to church because they think that is all that God requires, etc.

I needed to do something but didn't know what. I fasted, I prayed, I taught her from the Word. The problem was, to her these others also seemed correct in their doctrine so she was unsure. After all I'm just a man and they were teachers and preachers and of course her friends agreed with them. She would smile and politely say "I know dad". I spent a lot of time seeking God about all of this. I sensed I needed to do "spiritual warfare" on her behalf.

Buck season in Pennsylvania is a really big deal. Public schools and a lot of businesses close down for opening day, Monday following Thanksgiving. I don't get too excited about it, I hunt for the meat. For many years venison was the main source of meat at our table closely followed by wild caught fish. I almost never missed deer season because we depended on the food. Typically I would be provided with a deer which was nothing to write home about and was happy enough to have it.

This particular year I prayed that God would give me a big buck with a nice rack to show his approval to my daughter. Now I understand that doesn't really mean anything, but to her it would. Opening day I was running in and out of the house all day, I couldn't stay out of the bathroom. I was allergic to onions and some found their way into a meal. Needless to say I didn't get a deer that day. Tuesday was more of the same, except that I hadn't eaten since Monday and only would drink black coffee. By nine o'clock the coffee fast seemed to be working, but I was weak. I had been stalking a four point buck for weeks before the season and had a date with him at about nine-thirty. I was standing about one hundred and fifty feet behind my house in the woods overlooking a pasture field and woods down below.

At ten-thirty when he hadn't shown up I decided to go take a look. I crossed the fence and walked down hill through the pasture. When I got to the spot where I intended to intercept him I saw his tracks... He was there and gone before I got there, he was early. Something had spooked him, he made a u-turn and a hasty retreat veering to the left of where he had come from. I decided to track him for awhile. It is over a quarter mile to the scrub at the bottom of the field. I made it down to the bottom and into the scrub. When I got nearer to the creek I came across a blood trail. The trail led upstream through a swamp that was nearly too thick to travel through. I checked the sign and this was a large deer that was bleeding heavily and falling down when required to leap over any thing. I sat down to wait for the hunter. I thought "no one man will drag any deer out of there alone". I waited forty five minutes and "no show". I was tempted to leave but the fair thing to do was to find the animal and put it out of its misery. I thought of reasons why anybody would wound an animal this severely and not follow up on it. Maybe it is a doe (it was buck season). Oh well if it's a doe I'll put her out of her misery and call the game commission. As I tracked the deer I was pushing hard and something happened in my guts, it felt as though I had an icicle moving through the area of my liver. I felt something moving in the same area a little while later.

I trailed the deer until about two-thirty pm and lost the trail. How can I lose the trail of a large bleeding deer in such deep virgin snow? I doubled back several times and looked over my own trail to see what I had missed. The deer entered the creek and disappeared. Upstream was a deep pool that the deer would have had to swim and then disturb the snow on the overhanging boughs, impossible. Down stream the same thing. I was standing on a steep bank that rose to a hundred foot ridge above the whole creek. I thought the only possibility is that the deer must have drowned and been washed down stream. I scratched my head and went home with boots full of water and my outer garments covered in ice. It was a mile as the crow flies through the swamp to my house.

I got home, changed my clothes and prayed for God to show me where to find the deer. Then I lay on my back on the bed and continued to talk to God. I had a vision of where the deer was. I got up and prayed for God to give me grace to succeed in this hunt. I redressed and moved quickly to the spot that I lost the deer. I followed the creek a little farther and t

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here hidden from my previous vantage point was a plateau just like the vision. I walked carefully forward watching for what I saw in the vision. And the deer stood up in front of me. Behind the deer was a sheer ridge and behind me was a large, deep pool of water. Neither of us could get away. This was easily the largest buck I had ever seen. My jaw dropped as I watched him. He turned downstream to jump a fallen tree and as he raised himself up on his hind legs he fell on his right side. I should have shot him by now but am astonished at the sight of him and it hasn't occurred to me yet. He scrambled to his feet and stood facing me both of us just staring. It occurred to me to let him go because he was so majestic. He lowered his head to charge and my senses quickly returned. I shot him and he fell and sighed just once. I thought "If I were him I would be glad for this to be over". I worshiped God for his provision in our lives. It was about four pm.

I inspected him for wounds and found that he was shot from behind right in the ball of the hip. He could not have survived with a wound like that. I field dressed him and looked around for an exit to drag the deer home. Straight up was the only way. I tied on my rope and began pulling. I used the trees on the side of the ridge to pull myself and the deer up. Three times I tried and failed. The deer myself and my trusty Winchester tumbled down the side of the ridge. I was exhausted. I decided to go for help. I got home and called for help nobody was home and I couldn't leave it over night, the coyotes or bears would eat it. My wife and second oldest daughter were at home and would help me. We got back down there and it was getting dark. We couldn't get it up the ridge either. I prayed for direction. I cut the deer in half. We dragged it up the ridge in the dark and I lay down for about twenty minutes to catch my breath. We heard coyotes in the distance so my daughter was scared. We got up and made our way through the swamp. We got home about nine-thirty pm. The buck dressed out at about two-hundred pounds and had a nice eight point rack.

My daughter told her friends about how God directed my hunt that day and she began to see me as a person who hears from God again. God gives signs to confirm his word in us. I don't keep trophies of my conquests but the antlers from that deer are hanging on my bedroom wall to humbly remind me of God's provision in our lives. Nothing went as I planned that day, but my father had a plan.

When I was done hanging the deer I went home and asked my wife to fry me some steak and smother it with onions. She thought I was out in the cold too long or something. I told her that God had healed me and related the story to her while she cooked me the first meal of the day. The onions were the best that I had ever eaten. My life has been very hard but also very good. My God provides for all of my needs. I would do it all over again.

Re: The Buck Hunt, on: 2009/4/20 15:48

GOD Bless your love for your family. That's what shows through most of your posts most.

My husband stopped traffic on April 1st to rescue a squirrel that was hit pretty badly in the head by someone's tire. I thought the little guy would never make it the first week here - but he has made a REMARKABLE RECOVERY and I can only Thank GOD that I'm somewhat of a medical person - my husband was trying to feed him sunflower seeds while he was mostly unconscious. Oh my!

And I can only Thank GOD that HE saved this little feller's life again today. He's in my bathroom with the door closed in a special holder box - but today he got out and all the cats were watching under the door for him to come out. He could have Easily gotten out because that door is about 3 inches off the floor and he's just a little/young squirrel. I couldn't find him at first and thought for sure that the cats had gotten him. I searched every room for him and finally went back into 'his' bathroom and found him under a bathrobe that had fallen to the floor. :-D

He's safe and sound again and I've recovered the near heart attack .

Thanks for caring Brother.

Re: The Buck Hunt - posted by run2win, on: 2009/4/21 21:14

This is a great story. I especially loved the way God showed His love and faithfulness to you while you were interceding for your own child. I hope your daughter realizes very quickly what a rare and wonderful dad she has!