

Fishing, It can be an Eye for an Eye Proposition

Have you ever seen one of those big deep diving bass fishing lures up close; the ones with the two shiny razor sharp treble hooks jangling from the bottom? My little brother Heath has; and he loves to tell that story on me. However, over the last 25 years he's had a tendency to embellish it somewhat. So out of the kindness of my heart I thought it best I tell you the exact truth on the matter.

A pre-dawn steam was rising gently off the murky waters of Lake Whittenton that sticky hot delta morning. My father's rebuilt Mercury sputtered to life and we pushed along at a fair clip until we sat her down amongst the stump fields, sending our wake rolling up against the shore.

The boat wobbled wildly as Dad stepped across the coolers to his perch up front. It was at that precise moment Heath made his crucial mistake. He hesitated. I alertly dove for the only other seat, thus resigning him to a day sitting on the cooler; and worse, in the middle.

After our standard 20 minute rod de-wadding period we settled in to the routine, which consisted of Dad hurriedly fishing each stump and then paddling over to it to poke one of our lures loose. Our errant throws kept him on edge and after a while his reprimands were really starting to annoy me, so I stood up and reared back to make a long angry cast to show my disapproval, when all of the sudden, my follow through came to a grinding halt. Crack! My rod broke plum in two.

"What in the world?" I huffed. I was just about to fling it again when I heard Heath's low moan coming from behind me. I turned in time to see dad leaping back over the coolers with the boat paddle in a cocked position. He raised a knot on my noggin before I even had time to laugh at poor ole' Heath, who was sitting there with my big bass lure dangling from his eye.

I endured the tongue lashing of all times during the next few minutes. Dad was certainly in a foul mood as he worked a pair of pliers feverously to de-lure Heath's face. Mostly he was just upset we were wasting valuable fishing time. I sat fuming with the injustice of it all, my lip poked out like a moon bounce. "That wasn't any cause to whomp a fellow," I grumbled.

For the next twenty minutes I put my rod down in protest and commenced the most powerful pout ever portrayed. It was the least I could do on behalf of innocent kids everywhere who'd suffered under such tyrannical rule. The treble hooks had only grabbed him by the brow. There was hardly any blood! To make matters worse, Heath had come out of shock and was shooting me devious little grins, pleased with the trouble he'd gotten me into.

Then the most perfect thing happened. After all his fussing, Mister Perfect up front got his lure hung up in a low hanging branch. In his anger, dad reared back to snatch it loose when the limb snapped. It sent that big ole deep diver whistling back like a rocket. It came to a dull thud in the boat. Guess where? Yep, right on Heath's good eye! Heath likes to tell how he saw it in slow motion 3d. I grabbed for the paddle.

What's the morale of this story? Wow. You choose. It's like a parable for the whole Sermon on the Mount! Should I start with the obvious, like how we *are* commanded to be fishers of men? Or should I key in on the whole eye for an eye thing, and commend Heath for turning the other cheek? I could always blast Dad for not pulling the limb out of his own eye before whomping me because of the speck in my brothers. Surely I could mention the Bible says it's a rod, not a boat paddle that drives foolishness out of the heart of a child; but then I'd have to play the fool.

Looking back I guess we were all just playing the fool. Clearly there are better ways to handle life's little calamities. (*Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly. Proverbs 16:22 KJV*) I don't know about you, but I've had my fill of folly. I'd be happy if I never learned another thing the hard way. Therefore, I'm keeping my nose in the instruction manual for life from now on. It's called the Bible. What about you?

But anyway- Through God's great mercy Heath still has both of his eyes, although he now wears a football helmet when we fish. I always shy away from paddles, insisting that trolling motors work much better. Dad? Well, he threatened to whomp me with the trolling motor last trip. The rest is all in the eye of the beholder.

-Guy Sheffield 1-17-06