A Cherished Phone Call

In August 1983, I was living in an apartment in Spring, Texas about 30 miles north of Houston. I was beginning my second year of teaching. The start of a new school year overshadowed all other concerns of daily life, including the weather. After all, I was in Houston and the same forecast had been given since June: high 95, low 75.

However, a storm was building in the Gulf of Mexico which put everything else on hold. It was dubbed Hurricane Alicia which hit the Texas coast as a Category 3 hurricane. I had never lived in an area prone to hurricanes. Since I was on my own, it certainly caught my attention. I adhered to all the preparedness suggestions and hunkered down for a wild ride on Wednesday, August 17. A little after midnight I began to think it wasn’t going to be as bad as predicted. There were high winds and driving rain but not as bad as I had imagined. I looked out my patio door and noticed the pool was overflowing so I began to pile all my belongings into the middle of the apartment. The howling of the winds continued to increase and the pines swayed and bent.

Surprisingly, my phone rang at about 2:00 am. It was my Aunt Lucile calling from Florida. I was so surprised because I had not talked with her in quite a while and wondered why she was up at 3:00 am. She said she just wanted to make sure I was safe because she wasn’t sure how close I was to Galveston (about 70 miles). She said she’d pray and asked me to call after the storm passed.

I was glad she bolstered my confidence because within the next hour tornadoes swept through the area and the power went out. The tornadoes were more ominous and the power outage meant I would not hear any news bulletins. However, I rode the storm out with a sense of calm because I knew my Aunt Lucile was praying for me.