



June 2013

Reflections from Oklahoma

We left Saturday morning for Oklahoma after prayers from family and friends in a shopping center parking lot. The last donations were loaded minutes before we left from a family we do not know. We received their voicemail just in time. God is always right on time.

Near Tupelo, MS, we almost ran out of fuel. Where are the gas stations?? Thankfully just as our truck said LOW, God provided an exit with a gas station and we pulled into the station with the song "Whom Shall I Fear" playing.

Somewhere in North Little Rock, AR, a tire blew out on the trailer. It was after 5pm on a Saturday. We found a gas station and the owner said, "there is a tire shop right up the road and it should be open." When we pulled into the tire shop, guess what song was playing again... "Whom Shall I Fear." We met Ron, who is 68 years old and tough as nails. He had been working since 9am and he finished changing out all our trailer tires at 6:30pm. We told Ron that God was using him to help us get supplies to OK. He couldn't believe God would consider using him. We asked Ron if we could get a picture with him so our friends could see the man God used on Saturday night to help us. He smiled real big and wanted to see the picture on my phone. He told us he hadn't had his picture taken in years. In years. How can you not love Ron? We gave him a hug and a hat and thanked him again.

A family in Edmond, OK, saw on Facebook that we were headed to Oklahoma and they offered us a place to stay. The gate to their neighborhood closes at midnight. We were racing the clock and heading straight into a storm. We arrived around 11:45pm and hit that storm in their neighborhood. God's timing was perfect. We ran through the rain into the shelter of their home.

Sunday morning we went to Crossings Community Church with our hosts and witnessed over 25 baptisms. Beautiful. They personally know a family who lost everything in the storm and thanks to the consistent donations of Grace Klein Community, we were able to pull everything they needed from the donation room. Clothing for a family of five, a kid's bike, homeschool curriculum, blankets, bed linens, three filled pillowcases, a box of food and a decorated slat. Isn't it amazing that the winter clothing in the donation room is exactly what they needed! Thankful that volunteers had everything sorted and easy to pull so that we could share with this family.

Grace Klein Community signed up to partner with Journey Church, a local church in the community that responded immediately to the various tornadoes that have come through the region. God has gifted them in logistics and they were organized, efficient and orderly. They have work orders ready for volunteers to go to specific families to serve. The volunteers can also help in the store at the distribution center and help with sorting and organization in the warehouse. No one has time to be idle.

When we first arrived, a truck from Nevada had arrived with supplies. A little girl dreamed of collecting teddy bears for the children, and 2800 teddy bears later they were in Oklahoma. We helped them unload teddy bears and a lot of other items that were donated.

After that, we unloaded all the donations from Alabama. The pillowcases were a hit and they wanted them to be up front at the tables where families come in and tell their stories. After they meet with the families, they give them a filled pillowcase for each child in their family. The pillowcases are a symbol of hope, right there with the Bibles and the prayer the volunteers share with the families. What I kept thinking about were the Bibles in those pillowcases. God tells us that the Word will not return void, but will accomplish what is intended, the saving of many lives. We sent the Word out in almost 300 pillowcases and it will accomplish what is intended.

The day we were in the Journey Church distribution center, over 40 families came by to pick up supplies they needed. One man said his best friend and his son's best friend died in the first tornado and then their own home was destroyed in the next tornado. The pain seems endless.

Sunday night, we drove through the neighborhoods of Moore, OK. The mood was somber. All was quiet. People were in their driveways cooking dinner or watching their kids play outside. Some of the people had energy left and were still hauling debris and picking up trash. Many were out walking their dogs amongst the debris. Moore has already cleaned up and hauled out all the debris from the school that was completely destroyed. Temporary toilets were scattered throughout the neighborhoods for the residents and workers. Stuff was everywhere. Lumber, mattresses, clothes, a lone sewing machine on an empty slab where nothing else was left.

We were reminded that our modern conveniences isolate us. Take away the electricity and everyone comes outside. Neighbors talk to one another. They sit under canopies in camp chairs and tell their stories. Men and women let their guard down and expose their hearts. A catastrophe gives us permission to feel, to talk about real things, to pray together, to cry, to care.

Disaster is a unifier. Christians work together. We are so much more effective together than apart. We will probably never see many of our new friends again this side of heaven, but we worked together like we had known each other forever. We talked about the beauty of the body of Christ as we worked together. Hard to put into words what it feels like to unexpectedly serve Jesus with brothers and sisters from Oklahoma, Missouri, Arizona, and Illinois. We all love Jesus. We all love people. We are in this together. Community.

God has so much more for His people, for all of us. He has created each of us with unique gifts and abilities. We all have something to give. Now that we all know we have something to give, we have to make the choice to actually do it. God is never going to pressure us to get up and get going. He does not need us to accomplish His purposes or meet the needs of His people. Our choosing to give or not give is on us. He commands us to give, all through scripture, telling us to meet the needs of the poor, minister in Jesus' name and be generous givers. But, He is gracious. He never makes us. He waits patiently for our obedience. He knows our giving will draw us closer to Him and make us dependent on Him. He is waiting for us to engage in the relationship, in the day-to-day journey with Jesus. He has a path, a perfect beautiful straight path for each of us. Our paths will look different, but they will all be planned by Him. He will use us for His purposes if we will get out of the way and follow Him.

There are so many people we met and so much more that God did on our journey, but we can't fit it all on these two pages. If you want to read the whole story, you can check out our website at gracekleincommunity.com.

Thanks for being our community,

*And do not forget to do good and to share with others,
for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16*