



*"We love because He first loved us."*  
- 1 John 4:19

## "Just a South African Girl Living in an Alabama World"

**"... For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."**

Philippians 2:13

It all "seemed" to start with one phone call. On November 30, 2016, I received a special request from one of my monthly food delivery recipients. Ms. Gilmore lives simply, survives on the bare minimum, and always gives any extra she may have to those in her surrounding community. She put her pennies together to love on her grandkids this Christmas. She had enough for all of them except the two young boys.

Over the past two years it's been a treasure building relationship with Ms. Gilmore. I love her humble soul, hearing her heart for Jesus and her compassion for his people. Ms. Gilmore called to share of the need for assistance to provide treats for her grandkids this Christmas.

I shared of the need on the Grace Klein Community Facebook group, Acts 4:32. Expectant to see what the Lord had in store, I posted their clothing sizes, needs and desires for Christmas. Within two short hours, an individual responded: *"My bunko group would like to take care of the needs of these two babies."* One hour later another individual responded: *"Keep us posted on upcoming families, we're interested!"* A day later, another individual: *"We'd love to adopt a family!"*

God does it every year; it's been a joy seeing the Lord work in the hearts of so many as we continue to receive word of "Christmas is Canceled" in various homes due to the lack of resources. I've had the honor of assisting with the coordination of child sponsorships this Christmas. There were moments when we received word of a large number of children in need, and I became concerned about how we would find sufficient sponsors. Oh, but God. Our Provider!

**"Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"** – Matthew 6:26

Not only did the Lord send sponsors for every child sent our way, He even sent sponsors from across state lines! I've had the honor of communicating with foster families, families in the process of adopting, grandparents, single moms, and even those who transport special needs kids to and from school, all with a heart to give their children, grandkids, or families they care for, a special Christmas.

It has been so encouraging hearing testimonies from the "gift givers" this year. One family shared that they became stressed out over the Christmas season as they felt obligated to buy gifts for each other that neither party really needed. They stopped purchasing gifts years ago, and began focusing on children in need. They personally don't have children of their own, so shopping for a child / family has been such a joy for them.

I have no doubt God orchestrated the pairing of each sponsor with each child in need.

One family in particular has deeply impacted my heart. A foster mom, in the process of adopting a young child, willing to take on his special needs adult brother, contacted us via Facebook, seeking assistance to love on these brothers during the Christmas season. Both boys come from terrible situations. The foster mom simply asked for clothing, and mentioned one or two wishes the boys had for Christmas. We made the requests known to a family interested in “adopting” a family for Christmas. Oh, it has been a joy coordinating every step!

When contacting the foster mother, informing her that gifts had been contributed for the boys, I could see the Lord doing an incredible thing in this woman’s heart. God opened the door for us to share Jesus with this mom, reminding her that the Lord is with her, and that she is deeply loved by a Mighty Father. Her faith in the Lord has been restored. She was at the end of her hope, but through a sponsor family, this lady saw Jesus meet her right where she was at, and provide for the boys this Christmas.

Child sponsorship and gift giving have never really been about the tangible gifts. There’s a greater gift, and it is so beautiful seeing “it” being imparted through simple gift giving. The gift of hope. The gift of life. The gift of adoption. The gift of family. The gift of love. The gift of provision. Jesus. He is the true gift.

This month I personally needed butter. Weird, I know. God gave me the idea of baking banana bread to raise further funding for missions during this Christmas season. Through friends and other donations, the Lord provided all the ingredients I needed to start baking, except for butter. With deadlines approaching, I purchased a block of butter, and returned home. I’m really not sure how I expected a block of butter to multiply into enough for 28 loaves, but perhaps I was feeling optimistic. Little did I know, God had something up His sleeve. As soon as I returned home I received a text that butter, among other items, had been donated to Grace Klein Community. (We have never before received a donation of butter.) Friends, who knew I had been praying for butter, texted to make sure I knew that the Lord had provided! I think we were all in shock. Of course He did! He does it every time! Jehovah Jireh, our Provider!

I immediately drove up to the office and was able to get enough butter for ALL 28 loaves! And yes, I returned the 1 block of butter I purchased from the store. We serve a great God!

**“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” – Ephesians 3:20-21**

Thank you for praying for my family and I during this celebratory season. I am so thankful for friends and family in Christ. My mother recently surprised me with a Christmas card mailed all the way from South Africa! And... I was able to send a little gift to my mom through a friend who recently visited the states.

God always makes a way.

**Can you get on your knees for me?**

Pray for a sweet refreshing for 2017, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, that I may continue serving the Lord with all my heart, mind, soul and strength.

