



Widows Harvest MINISTRIES

In All Things Give Thanks to Our Heavenly Father In Christ Jesus Name | End of Year Update 2019

Merry Christmas!



Dear Friends, Ministry Partners and Supporters:

If you will remember, at this time last year, I reported that we were running a negative balance of -\$93,619.00. By the end of 2018, thanks to your prayers and generosity we were able to reduce this negative figure by 75%. Then, in the spring of 2019, I presented an opportunity to help us qualify for a \$25,000.00 matching grant from a local foundation, and again, thanks to your prayers and generosity, we were able to raise the amount needed to receive this grant. Not only that, many of you also increased your giving in order to help us make up the shortfall in our monthly financial needs. Now, I am very thankful to report that as of this update we have a positive balance. Please continue to pray that we will be able to maintain this positive balance as we enter into the first quarter of the New Year, a time when giving typically falls way off.

Not unlike most years this has been a very productive one for us. Approximately 104 widows were served in the areas of home repair and lawn care needs. For many of these widows we served, we responded to multiple requests for help throughout the year totaling 328 individual projects, and with the help of 2153 volunteers from 22 churches including 8 mission teams.

Recording statistics, however, is a relatively easy thing to do, but how do you really measure the impact that is being had on both the widows being served as well as the volunteers that come out to serve? When I first started serving widows 32 years ago, I assumed that if someone was in need, especially if that person was identified as low income or poor, and I had the means to help that person, I wasn't "needy" and God had placed me in the position to try and "save the day" so to speak. After several years of being privileged to serve widows I realized that I wasn't there at all to save the day because God is the only one that can do that. In my own way I came to realize that I was and will always be the one who is "the most needy" regardless of how great the need is of the person God has placed in my path to serve.

What I mean by "the most needy" is that my need will always be the greatest for being more like Jesus in my unconditional love and acceptance of others. In fact, I am not at all certain that we can become more like Jesus in the absence of being willing to not only respond to the needs of others that God places in our path, but that we have to also place ourselves in the position for this to come about. Which can't be done from a distance, or only with those that are most like us and can repay the favor.

In the Apostle John's recording of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, in chapter 4, verse 4, He tells us that on his way to Galilee Jesus "...had to go through Samaria." There was a longer route that Jews typically took in order to avoid Samaria just so they didn't have to risk such an encounter as the one Jesus had with the Samaritan woman, because the Jews despised the Samaritans. There is a lot to Jesus' encounter that I won't go into other than to say that by his example we all "have to go to Samaria," as well. And that each of us also needs to keep in mind that sometimes we are the ones bringing Jesus to someone in need, and at other times we might be the one in need of someone to bring Jesus to us.

It is very hard for us, though, to perceive ourselves as being needy, when our educational, financial, social, etc. circumstances is telling us otherwise. What we often fail to recognize, though, is how God sees us, rich or poor, privileged or not. And because of this it distorts the way that we assess our favor with God. It causes us to lose site of the fact that God sees all of us, who are betrothed to his son and who have become citizens of heaven, equally. The only real distinction between us is really the level of dependence/trust each of us places in God rather than on our own abilities.

One of the most profound insights I think God has allowed me to understand over the years is that so many of the widows I have served and continue to serve have such a deeply dependent faith that my own faith is dwarfed by it. Yes, it is true that all of us have a confessed faith, but it is not true that all of us have the same dependent faith. That kind of dependent faith that I have personally witnessed in the lives of widows generally comes when there is no place else to turn but to God for our basic necessities, like food, clothing and shelter. In other words, God is our only safety net and the fact that God puts the need of someone like a widow in our path is more a reflection of their prayers being answer because of their deep faith, than any worldly means that we might have. That is probably why Jesus modeled for us serving and not being served, and the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others." Perhaps today, it has become even more important for us to remind ourselves of this in our daily walks.

TESTIMONY

I thought it would be great to end this by sharing with you a personal testimony from one of our volunteers who drives the van in order to pick up widows for their weekly widow's prayer ministry as an example of what can happen when we are willing to serve and not be served and thinking more highly of others than we do ourselves.

These are Dan Vermeer's own words:

"Prior to my retirement from Corporate America in February of 2018, I had prayed for months that God would somehow use me to assist in His Kingdom work. He led me to Andy Mendonsa, Herm Bel, and Wil Davis who in turn led me to Widow's Harvest. At first, I envisioned simply driving these dear sister widows to and from their prayer meetings on Tuesdays, but it only took a short time to get to know them and to love them! My experience with Widow's Harvest is absolutely a joy and a blessing. Being a small part of Widow's Harvest has changed my life. Each time I am with this group of ladies I witness unwavering and amazing faith in their Heavenly Father. For many of these sisters material things, including food, is in short supply. Yet their faith is so strong that they never doubt that God is and will provide for their every need. I witness true and joyful worship as they sing together each week. Their voices joined together is a moving experience as they sing from memory beautiful texts of God's love and promises. I have no doubt that the Saints in heaven are joining in with them. And I witness prayer warriors that I have rarely experienced in my lifetime, praying rarely for themselves but always for the needs of others no matter what the issue. My sisters pray for me, my family, as well as my friends, and we all have felt the power of their earnest and loving requests they bring on our behalf to the Father's throne.

The widows have indeed taught me what true faith is, what true worship is, and what true prayer is! My involvement with Widow's Harvest has and continues to bless me far more than I bless them. My hope and prayer is to continue to serve this amazing and wonderful organization. And may God continue to bless all those involved in Widow's Harvest Ministries." The widows have indeed taught me what true faith is, what true worship is, and what true prayer is! My involvement with Widow's Harvest has and continues to bless me far more than I bless them. My hope and prayer is to continue to serve this amazing and wonderful organization. And may God continue to bless all those involved in Widow's Harvest Ministries."



Dan Vermeer with Blanche Bobo.

Blanche is one of the widows Dan regularly gives a ride to. Sadly, this photo taken at our Thanksgiving luncheon for our widows, November 19, 2019, was to be Blanche's last time with us. She is moving to Maryland to live with her daughter there because of her declining health. Please pray for her in this transition. All of us will miss her deeply.

Merry Christmas!

May All Of you Have a Wonderful Season of
Rejoicing in Our Savior's Birth!

Andy Mendonsa
Director WHM