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“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”  
Isaiah 43:18-19

Blessings to you in this New Year. This verse reminded me of something Larry likes to tell the inmates and that is the fact that God put your eyes in the front of your head, so you can look forward instead of looking back. It can be good to look back and see what God has brought you through, but we need to look forward to what God is doing right now and what He wants us to do to further His Kingdom.

Larry and our brother Gary Wise made the trip to Gentry, AR to pick up Little Debbie cakes for all the Arkansas prisons on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Being able to use our enclosed trailer to haul 20,500 snack cakes saved us the cost of renting a U-Haul truck so that was a blessing. It is a long day with Larry leaving our house around before 1:00AM and not getting home until early evening. But we know the inmates look forward to the snack cakes and we are thankful to McKee Foods for donating such a large quantity to the ADC.

A big ‘thank you’ to everyone that helped with our Christmas Behind Bars Outreach. We couldn’t have accomplished what we did without your help. We collected a total of 194 pair of socks and 176 bars of soap. We also bought Ramen noodles, Starlite mints, peanut butter cheese crackers and hot cocoa for some of the prisons. We were able to support five prisons this year; the Ouachita River Unit in Malvern, AR (including inmates housed at Bowie County Corrections in Texarkana, TX); Delta Unit in Dermott, AR; Texarkana Work Release/Regional Maintenance in Texarkana, AR; ALETA in Camden, AR and the Hempstead County Jail in Hope. We gave three Christmas cards to each inmate at Texarkana Work Release and two Christmas cards to the inmates at ALETA.

Larry and I took the sacks to Texarkana Work Release on December 15. We couldn’t hand the sacks out as we have done in years past due to some changes in management but as we told the new warden, the main thing we wanted to do was make sure these inmates got the sacks. Some of the inmates helped unload the sacks and told us how thankful they were to get the sacks. They went on to say the commissary was closed until after the first of the year and they also didn’t get their indigent pay. The following day, we met John Coons and Heavy and Alice Pennington at the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Center in Camden, AR to give those inmates their Christmas sacks. We gathered in the dining room and Larry told the men about our ministry. We spent quite a while visiting with the men and then John Coons dismissed us in prayer.

On Wednesday, December 19 Larry, Darryl Fox and I took the Christmas sacks to the inmates at Hempstead County Jail in Hope. Larry and Darryl were able to spend a lot more time with the men than they usually do. The female officer on duty went with me to the women’s pod. I told the ladies about our ministry and asked if anyone had any specific prayer requests. No one spoke up so I prayed for them as a group. When I finished, the officer told them she knew some of them probably thought she was rough on them, but she also wanted to pray for them, and she did. I know they appreciated the sacks, but you tell by the look on their faces that they appreciated the prayers too.

We appreciate the prayers as I continue weekly treatments at UAMS in Little Rock. I have had to skip two treatments recently; one due to low platelets and one due to low white blood count. I am scheduled to have my eighth treatment on January 15. My oncologist told me that when my twelve treatments are complete, I will meet with the surgeon again. I still struggle at times to eat like I should and finding food that tastes good can be a challenge. That's when Larry has to 'get tough' and find something for me to eat. We know that God has His hand on us and trust in Him that I will be completely healed. I continue to get cards and letters from inmates that we write to encouraging us and letting us know they are praying. One young man crocheted me a beautiful white neck scarf with pink breast cancer survivor symbols on it. He is at a half-way house now but while he was in prison, both of his parents passed away. He thanked us for being there for him during his time of grief. Another young man in Texas prison will be going to a half-way house this month. When he first wrote to us, his mother had just passed away, his wife had divorced him, and the Muslims were trying to persuade him to convert to their religion. We encouraged him, prayed for him and shared Scriptures with him. Both men said they couldn't have made it without us. I am going to remind them it was God who put them in our path because we honestly don't know how they got our address.

During the early morning hours of December 1, an EF-1 tornado came through our subdivision. I woke up around 2AM and remember thinking the wind sounded awful and it was pouring down rain. The weather app on my phone showed we were under a severe thunderstorm warning. I remember saying a quick prayer of 'thank you Jesus for protecting us in this storm' and not long after that, the power went out. When we got up the next morning, we were shocked at what we saw. Some of our neighbors had trees on their houses, others had trees uprooted. One of our trees was uprooted but it was not near our house or any building, so it didn't damage anything when it fell. Neighbors were out early checking on their neighbors and later in the day, helping each other clean up. It was a miracle that on one was injured during this storm and we are so thankful for God's protection.

We spent a few days during Christmas week in southern Illinois with my sister and her family. We visited other family in the area and attended Sunday morning service at 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church in Ellis Grove. We also visited my first-grade teacher, Violet Feaman. She is ninety-four years young and like we told her, we hope we are as active as she is when we are ninety-four!

As we begin another year of ministry, we want to start by thanking all of you for your support. This is not 'our' ministry; this is the ministry God laid on our hearts and entrusted to us. He knows our needs and those needs are supplied by people like you who believe in what we are doing. We would like to start collecting socks again so if you or your church would like to help, just remember that we need men's white socks.

Keep us in your prayers as we begin this new year. We know God has work for us to do this year and we want to be obedient to Him. Also remember to keep our country and our leaders in your prayers.

Blessings and Peace,

Larry & Kathy