

[100] Backpacks

William listened to the voice over the phone, weighed his options, and paused for a moment. “Let me pray about it,” he whispered.

William was inside Annual Homecoming listening to the preaching. On the other end of the phone were new friends sorting through backpacks in the cold. It had already been a long day of receiving, boxing, and sorting. William knew it was late and that the team outside had already done all that was possible.

“We don’t have it William,” said the voice from just outside. “We need at least 100 more backpacks to fill your request.” A pause hung in the air. “I looked at what we have, William, and if you just don’t go to the high school, we have enough backpacks for the elementary and middle schools.”

For years now, William has brought Christmas backpacks to the town elementary and middle school. He hoped to bless the high school, but the doors

always closed. This year was different — William received word that he could bring the backpacks and Christmas message to the high school.

“Let me pray about it,” William offered once more.

If the door was opened, surely God would provide, he reasoned to himself. As the speaker preached and musicians sang, William prayed. Outside, the team cleaned up, locked the truck for the night and headed inside for the remainder of the service.

“Bing!” The phone buzzed with the receipt of multiple text messages. “Bing!”, “Bing!”

“Hey! I arrived late tonight and have a van full of backpacks I need to unload,” the text read.

“Bing!”

“Our church is still collecting our backpacks. We usually collect about 100,” another read.

The texts were forwarded on to William. “Praise the Lord,” he boomed. “I know God is at work at this school.”

The next week, William arrived at a meeting with the school principal. As they discussed how to disperse the backpacks, William told the story of prayer and provision. He told the principal of how the high school was going to be cut, but that God — through His church — provided. He told the principal of a loving and good God. Tears began to collect in the corner of the principal’s eyes.

“I gotta get right with God, William.” With that invitation, William joined in with what God was doing in the soft soil of the man’s heart. The local leader received more than backpacks that day — he received the grace of God.

Thanks to the generous giving of our churches through the Christmas Backpack project, a man saw the leading of a loving Savior — and followed. ■

