

“Put Me First”

“He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

2 Corinthians 1:4 (HCSB)

Harry Martin of **Radford Baptist Church** in Moneta, VA is no stranger to affliction. He once had a back injury so severe, it was nearly impossible to walk. It became so intense, he believed a wheelchair would be his fate.

By God’s grace, that would not be so. The Lord miraculously relieved Harry’s pain and provided him with the ability to walk unassisted.

Harry later encountered another challenging season when his wife suffered a major heart attack. COVID restrictions at the hospital prevented Harry from staying by her side, and he could only speak with and pray for his bride on the phone. After a six-week battle, the Lord took Harry’s wife to her eternal home.

For months, Harry grieved and received comfort only the Lord could provide.

Eventually, Harry felt God calling him to serve as a Disaster Relief chaplain. He asked God, “How can I serve You now? My wife is gone.” God gave him a specific answer: “Trust Me. Put Me first.”

Harry did just that. He focused on the Lord and completed the necessary training to deploy as an assistant chaplain.

When Hurricane Ian struck the coast of Florida in 2022, his training was put to use. The devastation sent SBCV Disaster Relief volunteers to Venice, FL, and Harry was part of the team to help families rebuild.

“God told me, ‘I will always give you the strength to do what I want you to do.’” Harry said, “I knew God had a specific person for me to talk to.”

The team found a home that needed a temporary roof and other necessities. The homeowner, Bill, shared with the volunteers that his wife and two pets had died within the previous 12 months and that the hurricane had made his home uninhabitable.

At that moment, Harry knew his purpose. He could sense that Bill was completely overwhelmed and in utter despair. Bill opened up about his affliction. Harry listened for a long time and

shared, “I know how you are feeling. I lost my wife two years ago.”

Bill locked eyes with Harry and said, “You really understand, don’t you? I can see it in your eyes.” Harry shared the simple truth of the Gospel, focusing primarily on the free gift of God in Jesus from Romans 6:23. Harry knew the Holy Spirit was talking through him.

Harry asked, “Bill, would you like to know for sure that you are going to heaven?” Bill said he would and prayed to receive Jesus. He let out a deep breath, dropped his head, stood up, pointed toward heaven, and exclaimed, “Well, praise God!”

Bill left the room to boldly tell the volunteers and neighbors what had happened. It was evident for anyone to see. He was a new man.

God comforted Harry at that moment, “See, you can serve without your wife.” Not only did God work in Bill’s life that day, but He worked in Harry’s life, too. ■



God gave him a specific answer: "Trust Me. Put Me first."

RESOURCE:

Join Harry and other volunteers to help families in need. Get trained in Disaster Relief so you can go on the next call.

For more information on Disaster Relief, visit:



sbcv.org/dr



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left to right: Bill Rosen stands with Harry Martin as they both share in the joy of Bill receiving Jesus as his Savior.