

“I’m Cold!”

As I left the beach it was dark and the sun had been down for a while. I briskly walked towards the parking lot thinking how great a plate of nachos would taste when I arrived home. I walked past a homeless person and asked how she was doing. She quickly answered good, and then she muttered some words as I sped by. As I headed to my car, I heard the ever-polite voice of the Holy Spirit say “you didn’t even try to hear what she said.” I walked back to her and said “I’m sorry, I didn’t hear the last sentence that you said.

She said “I’m cold!” The Holy Spirit spoke to me again and said “You know you have two coats just like that.” I smiled. I had been shopping in Hope’s Closet thrift store a few months ago and bought a brand-new insulated windbreaker for \$10. As I looked at that high quality windbreaker, I heard the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit say “why don’t you buy two of those so you have one for someone else?”

As I stood facing the homeless person, I said, “would you like my coat.” She quickly said “yes” and took my coat. At that point I recognized her. Her name was Tina and I had met her on a James Nixon street ministry GO Night.

When I drove home from the beach, I felt that I should do more. In the next 24 hours, I created a rough plan. As I shared my thoughts with people, many wanted to help. Within 48 hours I had an even more mature plan and tentative commitments from many people.

Five weeks later I took a step back to realize that God had done in a short amount of time. With a family’s help from New Life Church, I assembled 60 bags to hand out to the homeless in Jax Beach, and downtown Jacksonville. In addition to these bags, I had plenty of supplies and cash left over for

many months of replenishing the items. Also miraculously, I now had 100 brand new hoodies; one hoodie for each homeless person at Jax Beach.

Receiving the 100 brand new hoodies was very significant for me. This all started with me literally giving a homeless person the coat off my back. (Luke 3:11 “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none...”). God had multiplied the one coat by a factor of 100. (Matt 13:8 “Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold...”).

I found myself crying every time I thought about the one coat that I gave off my back being multiplied into 100 hoodies.

As I drove my car to pick up the 100 hoodies, the person donating them asked if I wanted 60 lbs. of pancake mix and 200 packages of cookies. My car was now packed so full of items that I couldn’t see out the back window. The items I received kept on multiplying unexpectedly. Even after distributing carloads of items, I still had a pile of items in my living room.

Due to a bad illness, I had to cancel a trip to Ohio to see my family for Christmas. Through a series of events I learned about a Christmas morning breakfast for the homeless at Jax Beach. I was still sick, but no longer contagious, so I grabbed three partial trash bags full of items to hand out to the homeless attendees.

As I handed out the items at the Christmas morning breakfast, numerous people said that the item I gave them “was an answer to prayer” and “exactly what they needed.” A few people spoke at the breakfast including one man who had tried unsuccessfully to commit suicide seven times. He now works for the Recovery Mission. Near the end of the breakfast, prayer teams started spontaneously forming and they roved

around praying for emotional and physical healing. Every encounter was special in its own way. One man started walking around with one of the prayer team members after he was prayed for a major leg issue. A man weighing well over three hundred pounds cried like a little baby as he heard how much God loved him. It appeared that he had never heard this before. Both the people being prayed for and the people praying were crying loudly together; seemingly expressing the same emotions at the same time. One woman spontaneously went into deliverance and began throwing up. The stories go on and on.

In just five weeks, the fundraising was at 140% of the goal, over 2700 items were purchased or donated, and we had \$303 left over to equip Bella Lamm with money for the future needs of her homeless ministry. All the fundraising was done outside of New Life church to not interfere with their planned extravagant offering. It was great to see how quicky people responded. It was even greater to see how many lives were affected by these items. The following ministries each received a portion of the 2700+ items.

- New Life Storehouse
- Bella Lamm Homeless Ministry
- Jax Beach Mission House
- Beaches Rescue Recovery Mission

There are many verses in the Bible. But how many of these verses do we choose to experience and “live” firsthand?

How many times have I walked past someone and not really listened to what they were saying? How many times have I missed the promptings of the Holy Spirit? This all began with a prompting to buy a second coat at Hope’s Closet. Also, if I would not have turned around in that parking lot on that cold night, I would have had a tray of nachos more quickly. But I

would have missed the adventure of a lifetime. How many times have I been too busy, worried, or distracted to hear the Holy Spirit’s voice? (Heb 3:15 ...“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...)