

When Tragedy Hits Home

by Rando Acres

“Forecasters warn of a significant outbreak of severe weather beginning as soon as today and intensifying Wednesday.”

Those were the words I read in the Atlanta Journal Constitution on Tuesday morning, April 26. To me, those words sounded like any one of the dozen or so severe weather warnings we seem to hear every year. In fact, a part of me looked forward to watching the beautiful display of lightning that would most likely accompany the storms.

I certainly never thought that the “severe weather” would turn out to be the deadliest tornado outbreak since the Great Depression.

When I awoke Thursday morning to the news that my hometown of Ringgold, Georgia, had been hit by the tornadoes, my first thoughts were of my parents, who still live in the area. Once I learned that they were safe, my mind went to some of Hebron’s college students living in the affected areas.

In the days following the storms, God began to do a great work through His church! On Friday, a message was sent out on Facebook that Hebron would be making a trip to Northwest Georgia to help with the relief efforts the following day. The response was incredible!

A total of 15 people from Hebron traveled to partner with Oakwood Baptist Church in Chickamauga, Georgia, to help out in any way we could. Our group included people from the age of four to seventy-three. We were able to hand out food and water, help homeowners remove items from their destroyed homes, and begin the work of clearing debris.

Karl Riddett took his two sons, Davis, 13, and Jackson, 10, to show them that people right here in Georgia are vulnerable to these vicious forces of nature. Karl shared that “putting a face to the victims of the storm and hearing the stories of God’s miraculous provision” were important lessons that he wanted his sons to learn.

College student, Chris Butts, was grateful for the opportunity to “be the hands and feet of Jesus and help others in their need.”

For the families who lost everything, the recovery process will be long. Fortunately, God has mobilized His people to be a continuing force for good. If you are interested in being a part of the ongoing relief efforts, contact the Hebron Missions Office at missions@hebronchurch.org.