

Winter Has Arrived

Winter has finally arrived here in southern Wisconsin, and it has come with vengeance and in all its glory. In the last few days we have been hit complete with two large snowfalls and then an arctic vortex of cold and wind that is rather bone-chilling to say the least. When I go out to feed my beef cows, steers and heifers, I am just amazed at how hardy they are. Even my sheep and ponies don't seem to be fazed as they come running across the snow drifts with great nimbleness and grace to get their morning and evening hay. At least they have a couple small sheds to hunker down in out of the wind. The beef animals only have the trees for shelter. It was pretty cool, pun intended, to find the cows the other day when my wife and I were delivering their evening hay. They were all laying down in the creek bed with trees and snow drifts rising up on every side. It was a picture of tranquility. They had found their shelter and seemed as warm as toast and just as contented as I am sitting in my warm house resting in my recliner.

I had to borrow my nephew and his four-wheel drive McCormick tractor the other day to break through the snow drifts in the field to get out to my heifer pasture with some feed. That tractor walked right through the drifts with no trouble whatsoever. The next day I fired up my old two wheel drive narrow front end Super-H Farmall and thought I would just follow his tracks down to the feed bunk with hay and silage. I knew it was a gamble that I would be able to get through those drifts with my old girl and it sure was a gamble. The wind had blown all night and mostly filled in the tracks that my nephew had made, but I gave her a try anyway. When I came to the big drifts those large rear tires would spin and the front end would try to shift right or left so I kept pumping those rear brakes, first the right one and then the left to keep the front end straight. Several times I thought I was stuck for good, but I would back up a couple feet and churn forward again with the snow up to the rear axle at times. It was quite a challenge, but I'm proud to say that after a half hour or so I finally got out to the heifers with their feed. Now the challenge was to make it back, uphill. Somehow the track that I had cut helped just enough to allow me to dig my way back with all the same drama as the trip out. I had such a feeling of victory over the elements just by using pure grit and determination and a few prayers too.

We had my parent's family Christmas last weekend, and it turned out to be great fun to have most of the families here for the get-together. There were forty-eight of us who made it in a blizzard, including some thirty-five of my mom's great grandkids all playing happily together. There was hide and seek, uno, wrestling and a few other indoor games that probably should have been outdoor games except the blizzard made that an impossibility. One of my pastor brother from Colorado Springs even made the fourteen-hour drive to be here. There are four of us who pastor and it's always a joy to spend time together chatting about our faith and God's faithfulness along with a myriad of stories from our childhood. Anyway, mom had ordered a big birthday cake for Jesus, and we ate tons of chicken, cheesy potatoes, corn pudding, and other dishes to pass. The best part though was just getting together and letting all the cousins get to play and know each other better.

We have so much to be thankful if we just open up our hearts to God's presence. He is so good and marvelous in all His ways. In fact, in Psalm 118 the Psalmist is proclaiming the wonder of Jesus Christ as the cornerstone by which all of humanity could place their foundation in for

salvation. The writer says in verse 22 and 23, *the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is from the Lord and it is marvelous in our eyes.* Jesus Christ is the answer for each and every human being in the world. He wants to be the cornerstone, the foundation of our lives. Turn to Him today for a new life of purpose and meaning. Until next week, God bless.