

THE BOZEMAN REPORT

March/April 2017

Volume 3, Issue 2



Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:17)

Well, here we are, already 1/3 of the way through 2017. We have officially survived the Montana winter, and are currently enjoying what has been a very pleasant spring. Of course, even spring sometimes brings snow in our neck of the woods!

Continuing Bible Studies...

We have started working on having several Bible studies per week around town. As a part of that goal, we have started the Bozeman Bible Study Group, which we advertise through [Meetup](#) and on a [Facebook Page](#) that we designed with the hopes that it would generate some interest. I am also slowly building [a website](#) to use with the studies, and to make some of our information available after the fact. I still have a long way to go on the development of that site, but I hope to work on it over the next few weeks as I have time. There will be, I am sure, quite a bit of repetition of materials across the various sites that we are trying to develop.

Currently, we are usually doing four studies per week. On Tuesdays, we meet at 1 PM to read and discuss the Gospel of John. Then, at 6:30 PM, we have been having a series of studies on various biblical characters. Justin and I have both been trying to write short lessons for the character studies, so that we have something for visitors with us to take home with them. We also leave a copy or two at the study venue, along with business cards with our contact information.

On Friday, we typically schedule two studies, but they are on the same topic: the book of Acts. We have one at 7 AM, and then the second at 10 AM. We hope that by scheduling at two different times, we might be able to appeal to people on differing schedules. If we do not have any visitors join us at the 7 AM study, we typically spend some time studying Ezekiel together. This has proven to be a good opportunity to spend time together in study, and to also talk about and plan various aspects of the work here. My son, Jacob, has been a part of all of these studies, which has been an added benefit, even when we don't have anyone from the community join us. Cynthia has also been joining us for the studies on

Tuesday evenings.

We continue to struggle with the same types of issues that we found quickly upon beginning our work here. We continue to find many people who are quite willing to discuss scripture with us, on a cursory level. The challenge has been to move those lighter discussions to a deeper type of study, where we can sit down with open Bibles and really look at God's will for us. Because we have our studies in the same locations each week, we have had the opportunity to interact with some of the same people over and over again. One young man who is a barista at a coffee shop we frequent regularly has had several discussions with us. He is one of the reasons we continue to return there. He always asks what we are studying, and he usually knows what is in the passages we cite for him. He has a phenomenal memory, remembering names and such (which I am sure is helpful in his job), but he also often remembers where we are studying from week to week, and only confirms it by asking one of us where we had gotten to in our context. Even when we mention we are talking about a chapter in Ezekiel, he often knows, at least generally, what is in that chapter. Such Bible knowledge is often lacking in true believers! We continue to be hopeful that we might have more opportunity to have some deeper studies with this man. Pray for Elijah, that he might be willing to study more with us!

Our regular Bible studies continue to progress well. We are still studying *the Life and Journeys of the Apostle Paul* in our Sunday morning Bible study. We are nearing the end of Paul's third journey, as we have been looking at Acts chapter 20, and Paul's brief time in the city of Troas. This has given us the opportunity to discuss the early church's practices around the Lord's Supper, and how that directs our practices today as well. On Wednesday evenings, Justin is continuing to teach the book of Jeremiah. We have recently been studying chapters 38 and 39 of that book. Mrs. Norma Lauer from Morgantown, WV, continues to join us via teleconferencing software for this study. Recently, we also had a young couple from near Kalispell, MT, join us remotely as well. The Coulstons moved to Montana from Auburn, AL, not long before we came here. They initially were

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in the Helena area, and we had hoped that we would be able to work with them some, but they moved to the Kalispell area before we actually arrived in Bozeman. Kalispell is over 5 hours northwest of Bozeman. They had tried to work with an institutional group in that area for a little over a year, but have recently reached an “impasse” over practices that the group was not willing to put aside. So, Paul and Bethany are once again meeting in their home, and are by themselves. We are hopeful that our interaction with them will provide some encouragement and strength for them. Perhaps, at some point, we will be able to get to Kalispell and visit with them in person. I am sure they would appreciate your prayers on their behalf as they try to get something going as a sound work in that area.

We did have unexpected visitors to one of our worship periods on a Wednesday evening not long ago. We meet in our homes on Wednesday evenings, and we had planned for a night of singing rather than our regular Bible studies. Justin had a package that was mis-delivered to his neighbor’s house, and they just happened to bring it to him while we were having our singing service. They heard the hymns and asked to join us. After the worship, we learned that this young family are members at the Bozeman Church of Christ (the institutional group here in Bozeman). We are hopeful that we will have a door of opportunity there, as they are Justin’s next door neighbors, and seemed to be interested in what we were doing. We will be working to plant some seeds in their minds as to why we see a need for another work in this area, and hope that it will cause them to study issues of Bible authority more closely with us!

Average Attendance:

Sunday: 9

Wednesday: 10

of study with many other preachers, and the hospitality of the Miozza family, who open their home for us every year. They are a great example of biblical hospitality! We got to see some family and several friends that mean a lot to us. Since we are somewhat isolated here, it is very refreshing for us to be able to join others for these 2 days of intense Bible study. We returned encouraged, and ready to hit the ground running in our own work once again.

Trip to Exton, PA...

Thanks to the generosity of dear friends, Justin and I were able to once again attend a lectureship that is planned by Jeff Smelser in Exton, PA. This year, the topic was the book of Daniel. We enjoyed the time

Health Update...

In my last reports, I mentioned some issues that I have had with my health. I was sent for an MRI on my head because I had been losing my hearing quickly (I’ve lost much of the hearing in my left ear in the last 18 months). The doctor wanted to rule out a tumor in the ear via the MRI. Fortunately, they didn’t find any such thing in the ear, but the doctor did notice something else while reading the MRI that concerned him. I was referred to a neurosurgeon in Billings (as there are none in the Bozeman area), and was finally able to see him at the end of March. He was unsure of what was showing on the initial MRI, so he ordered another set done. I just had those completed yesterday (May 8th), and then had another appointment with the neurosurgeon. After this set of images, the doctor believes that what he was seeing on the original MRI was probably nothing to worry about. He does want to make sure that is the case, and so he has ordered one more set to be done in six months. I appreciate all the prayers that were offered on my behalf. While it is easy to preach, “Don’t worry!” it is much more difficult to live it when there is the potential of something serious! At this point, it appears that there really is nothing to worry about going forward!

Concluding Remarks...

Thank you all for your interest and support of our work. We continue to covet your prayers for all that we have going on, and for efforts that we continue to plan for the future. We have a lot of good things happening right now that we believe are planting the seed of the word of God. We will continue to do that, as much as we can, and continue to pray that God will give the increase!

I will mention, in closing, that we are hopeful of making a trip from here to West Virginia and Alabama to see family during the last half of June. We hope to see many of you during that time, and hopefully we will have opportunity to visit about the work here!