

THE BOZEMAN REPORT

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

In my last report, I wrote of the wide ranging wildfires here in Montana. For several weeks, the smoke was so severe in our area that we could not even see the mountains from our home (usually a very nice view). About the time we left for our travels for a meeting in Alabama in September, we were finally getting a little bit of rain that was giving the firemen some help. As we left the state, we were still enveloped in smoke most of the way to the border of South Dakota. By the time we got back, the smoke was almost gone, and we were able to see the beautiful scenery of our state! Now, as I write this update, winter is setting in. We have had a couple of small dustings of snow, but today we got hit with the full force of winter. We have gotten 8 or 10 inches here in Bozeman, but Justin and his family have gotten close to 2 feet of snow! It is rare for them to get more than us, and this big difference occurred in a distance of only about 30 miles! I love the winter time, so I always enjoy these snow storms, as long as we don't have to get out on a schedule for the day.

Travel...

The last couple of months has been very busy, but very good. In September, we were able to be in Athens, Alabama, with the Pepper Road church of Christ. Cynthia and I were members at Pepper Road for about a year just after we were married. There are several folks there that were members back when we attended with them in the mid 90s. It was a great blessing to us to be able to spend time with the brethren there, and gain encouragement for our work here in Bozeman. The brethren at Pepper Road have been a part of our work here, supporting us financially, since our move here. We have several friends that are now working with the church there, and it was also good to spend some time with them. We even had the opportunity to stay with Vicki Russell, who had moved to Kentucky for a year with her husband, Doug, and worked with us in Huntington, WV. Unfortunately, Doug was working out of town, so we missed out on visiting with him.

In this meeting, I presented a series of lessons from the book of Philippians on the topic of *Unity*. I gained much by putting the lessons together, and I hope that they were

beneficial to the brethren there as well. I have been working to present the same lessons here at home. Stephen Russell, who works with the church there, made the comment one evening that there is a need for us to study about the concept of unity if there are more than 2 people working together. He was correct! Whether preaching to 150 people, or preaching to our small group of 9, the biblical idea of unity does not change. Unity is a goal that every local body should strive for. But, it is imperative that we achieve unity in the manner that God prescribes, and not through the carnal views that are so prevalent today!

In October, I had the opportunity to travel to Morgantown, WV, and work with several other men in a lectureship centered on *Holiness*. The lectureship covered 3 days, and I had 2 of the lectures. My topics were: *The Holy Priesthood* and *Perfecting Holiness*. I believe that much good was done in the lectureship, with each man putting together good materials that emphasized the need to live a holy life before God. This is a topic that does not seem to be focused on nearly as much as it should be, especially when it comes to making specific applications. In a society that has become more concerned with offending others, we as evangelists and teachers are not immune from being hesitant in being plain when identifying sinful behaviors that will condemn people to an eternity in hell. We are sometimes more afraid of hurting someone's feelings than we are of them losing their souls.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age... (Titus 2:11-12)

This effort also gave me the opportunity to visit with family and friends that live in that area. Some of the folks from Huntington were even able to come up for a day or two. It is always good to be with them! My dad, David Brewer, was one of the other men involved in the lectureship, so I was able to see my parents for a while as well. Jacob, my oldest son, flew with me (his first trip by air), and so we had a good chance to spend some time together. I do believe it was

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a great series of lessons for him to be a part of, as we must work to instill the idea of holiness in our children from a young age! The brethren in Morgantown have also been a part of our work here in Bozeman since our planning stages. We are so thankful for both of these congregations and their part in our work. I am also thankful for opportunities to work with them, and get to know some of the folks there a little better!

Local Work...

Our local work continues as normal, with us trying to have at least a couple of community studies per week. That has been a bit difficult with all the traveling, but that is one benefit of having two men working here. When one of us needs to be gone for a while, the other still is able to continue on with the work. Justin has done a good job of helping me have the time to prepare for all of the work I was needing to do for the meetings elsewhere. I appreciate all that he has been able to do!

Justin recently finished the book of Jeremiah in our mid-week Bible study. That was a lengthy study, but one that was quite beneficial to us. We are now studying about evidences for the Bible. I am looking forward to this study, and have enjoyed the first couple of studies in this theme.

I am continuing to teach the Sunday morning Bible study, and we are still looking at the *Life and Journeys of the Apostle Paul*. We have progressed up to the time of Paul leaving for Rome as a prisoner. We may finish this study around the first of the year, after which I believe I am going to start a study that I hope will go hand in hand with the class Justin is doing on Wednesday evenings. That will be *How to Study the Bible*. I believe that the material that Justin is putting together will set the stage for jumping into the materials I'm working on.

Average Attendance:

Sunday: 9

Wednesday: 9

Personal News...

First, the good news! We are getting very near to the due date of our 4th child. She is due on December 11! I appreciate your prayers for Cynthia and our baby girl as that time approaches. We are getting excited about her arrival, and have begun getting her room ready for her. I know that she will be here before we know it! Cynthia is convinced that we will have the coldest, snowiest December in years because we have this little one on the way. That would hold true to form with our other winter baby, Jacob.

As some of you already know, I have had a sudden loss of hearing in my left ear. I went to the doctor at the first of the year because I had noticed a decline in my hearing, especially in that ear. At the first of October, I was able to make a trip to Missoula to see a specialist, and see if there was anything that could be done about the hearing loss. The hearing test showed that I have lost even more hearing since the first of the year. The specialist had a couple of ideas of what might be causing my problem, but one of the options requires surgery to confirm. So, he has started treating for the second option to see if the symptoms improve or continue to deteriorate. I am supposed to go back to see the doctor at the end of December, and we should get some better answers then. The bad news is, the doctor has not given me any hope of regaining any hearing in my left ear. I have nearly lost all hearing in that ear now, so that has been hard to get used to. Since we don't know what is causing the hearing loss, I have been a bit worried about the possibility of the same thing happening in the other ear. I would appreciate your prayers about all of this, that we might get answers and that the best possible outcome for our work might occur.

I've had another issue that has surfaced, which was found incidentally to trying to track down what is happening in my ear. I had an MRI done to look for a tumor in the ear (which was, thankfully, not present), but which found what may be an abnormality in my brain. I had a follow-up MRI done 3 months later, to see if there were any changes. They were not able to tell, conclusively, if what they are seeing on the MRI is something to be concerned about or not. I am to go to Billings next Monday (November 6) for the third MRI. Lord willing, this one will tell us if this is really something that we need to be concerned about, or just an abnormality in my head. Prayers on this front would be much appreciated as well!

Thank you all so much for being interested in our work and our wellbeing. I feel like I am burdening you with a lot more personal issues this year than ever before. I do covet your prayers, both for our health and for our work here.