

THE BOZEMAN REPORT

March/April 2019

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

Greetings from Bozeman, Montana! As we've come to the end of April, it is finally starting to warm up a bit in our neck of the woods. We did get a couple of substantial snows throughout March and April, but that is a good thing for us. We are hopeful that the late moisture will once again help with wildfires around us later in the summer. There are always fires, but their severity can be cut down drastically if we have good moisture at the right times of the year!

The work here continues to go well. I believe that good things are continuing to happen here, even though we have not yet seen numerical growth. We continue to have good opportunities that we are trying to take full advantage of. Over the last few weeks, we've had a few visitors from the community. One older gentleman came to both our Bible study and worship period. He seemed to have some background with the church, but had left for a denomination. I am not sure that he is really interested in studying with us much, but rather came to fulfill his own curiosity about this "new group." We are still hopeful that he might come back to visit, and start a study with us.

The second family may be more promising. We had an older couple with their daughter and a grandchild visit with us one Sunday. They are from the institutional church, but saw our advertisement on Facebook and decided to come visit. They were very friendly, and ended up spending quite a while after services talking with us. We hope that the door has been opened for us to discuss some of the differences between us and the congregation where they normally attend. We have hoped that a door might be opened with some of the institutional groups in town, where we might discover some who are not comfortable with the direction that those groups have chosen. We are prayerful

that this might be the first of many contacts that we can make, as they are a large family. We will see what the future holds, but we are thankful to have those who have at least come out to visit with us, and provide an opportunity to meet and begin a conversation!

Sermons...

After finishing up a series on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, I was able to preach a few sermons that I hope have been strengthening and encouraging for our group. Some recent titles include:

- Christianity: Emotional or Intellectual
- Hacking Agag to Pieces
- Turning the World Upside Down
- Epaphroditus: A Man of Example

Most recently, I have started a series of lessons that I originally prepared some time ago on the "I AM" statements of Jesus in the gospel of John. This is a series I really enjoy, and have worked over and updated several times over the last few years. I plan to do at least 6 lessons in this series, but may expand it a bit as there are couple of Jesus' statements that I have not yet developed into sermon form.

Bible Studies...

We continue to have a good slate of Bible studies every week. Recently, Justin has been teaching a study on 1 John on Thursday evenings. This has been a great study, and I think it is both challenging and encouraging for all that are able to be a part of it. Justin and his family were able to take a trip to visit family during March, and

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Average Attendance:

Sunday: 15

Wednesday: 13

Personal news...

Justin, Jacob, and I were able to make our annual trip to the Exton Two Day Study, which is organized by Jeff Smelser in Exton, PA. This yearly trip is always a great encouragement to us, giving us an opportunity to study together with men seeking to do work similar to what we are engaged in. We studied the book of Isaiah this year, and the study was very beneficial to me. We enjoyed the great hospitality of Patricia Miozza while there, who opened her home up (as usual) to a number of preachers. Her hospitality gives us opportunity to extend our study time together, as we often stay up to all hours of the night discussing various topics. I know that I return home feeling tired, but spiritually refreshed and energized, ready to get back to the work.

We did miss our dear friend Angelo Miozza this year. I have mentioned Angelo frequently over the last couple of years, as he has been fighting cancer. Angelo passed from this life in March. He thoroughly enjoyed the Exton Two Day Study, and was always involved “behind the scenes” as he would say (“I’m just a civilian” was often heard from Angelo). His influence and example were a part of our studies, and will continue to be so even as we must move forward without his physical presence. Our return this year certainly had bittersweet feelings, but we have all been reminded of how fleeting life is, and how we are all seeking the same goal.

Visitors...

Though we don’t have a lot of visitors that come through in the winter time, we do occasionally have those that are looking to enjoy the Montana winter activities. The Jerkins family, from Auburn, AL came through for a few days, and we got to spend some time with them. Wes Gossett also came through briefly and we got to visit for a bit. It was great getting to catch up with him, and hear about the work he is doing in New Jersey. We expect the number of visitors to begin to pick up, as the “tourist” season begins shortly!

As I close, let me say, “Thank you!” Your encouragement of our work is so valuable to us. Please continue to keep us in your prayers!

that gave me the chance to take over that time slot. I taught the first chapter of the book of James. I enjoyed being able to delve into that epistle for a few studies, and will plan to pick that book up again when Justin has finished John’s epistles.

We also have a couple of studies on Friday mornings, in which we are reading through and talking about the book of 1 Samuel.

All of these studies have been good for us, and give us a chance to both invite folks to small group studies, and to interact with folks in the venues we use for the studies. As I have mentioned previously, we often have a chance to talk to people who haven’t come to the study, but show some interest in what we are doing. We give out invitations to join us at future studies, and pray that the seed lands on good hearts.

I am continuing a class on How to Study the Bible on Sunday mornings. We have been discussing in our recent studies principles of authority. I am planning to discuss in more details over the next few weeks these principles, and focus some of our attention on the study of biblical examples especially.

Justin has now started a study of the book of Philippians on Wednesday evenings. We are only a couple of classes into the study, but it is promising to be a good one! We have already had some very good discussion. As you know, this epistle is particularly encouraging to study when you feel like things are tough. Paul’s letter is one that can lift the spirits and encourage the brethren greatly!