

# 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)*

Greetings from balmy Montana! While we are still in the throws of winter here, it hasn't seemed like it lately. Our winter has been quite mild, and now it seems like spring is setting in. Of course, since it is only early March, there's still a chance of a late snow!

We've had a lot of sickness that has hit our small group here in Bozeman. Over the last couple of months, almost everyone in the congregation has been sick at one time or another. It seemed like we were just passing it on from one person to another until it went around again. We finally ended up canceling one Wednesday evening Bible study to try and break the cycle. Just recently have we had a service where everyone was present! It seems like everyone is mostly on the mend now, so that is encouraging.

## ***Bible Studies...***

Our Bible study schedule continues as it has in the past, though we did have some interruption around the holidays and going into the new year, mostly because of sickness. Over all, the classes seem to be going well, and have been profitable for all who have been involved.

On Sunday morning, I am continuing with our study entitled "[Walking Worthy of Your Calling](#)." Over the past several classes, we have been focusing on Paul's writings in Romans 12-15. Those chapters go into some depth as to what a

Christian is supposed to look like. We have been using those passages as a starting point to discuss some more specifics of Christian behavior. We have had some very good discussions centered on the things a Christian is supposed to do, or not do, in his dealings with others!

On Wednesday evenings, Justin has started a study on the Minor Prophets. We have been studying Hosea for a couple of weeks. It is heart wrenching to read of what Hosea was told to do by the Lord. Yet, he was willing to do just as he was told, and did so without complaint. There is certainly much we can learn about God's relationship with Israel through this book. If you are interested, I wrote [an article about Hosea in our February bulletin](#).

We have been doing a reading of Hebrews for our repetitive reading schedule this year. We intend to read the book through 12 times throughout the year. I have recently started an online study group to discuss the book. We have had several who join in on the discussion from Montana, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and occasionally Alabama. I have really enjoyed doing this study as it is interesting to see what comes out of each new reading. I've also enjoyed being able to connect with folks across the country to study together.

We have two regular community studies going right now as well. One is currently also in the book of Hebrews. In that study we are reading through a chapter per time, and then spending just a few minutes discussing it. The second study is in the book of Revelation. Mike Phillips is doing a good job of leading this discussion, and we have had some very good turn out. One lady, Lilly, has been to most of the studies, and seems to be very well versed in the scriptures. We've run into a few things that she has disagreed with, but she continues to come back to the study and participate in a good way. We continue to pray for her as she seeks to find the truth!

I am continuing to work with my friend Jim. He continues to do well physically, and we have had many good opportunities for Bible study and discussions. He seems to want to do right, and find truth, but he is still

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having hangups over things he has learned in the past. He has a hard time letting go of what he thinks he knows from his previous religious teachings. Quite often, when we talk, he seems to realize that what we are showing him from scripture is correct, and yet when we seek to make more pointed applications of those teachings, he struggles to accept it. I am currently doing some lessons on New Testament baptism, so I am sure that will lead to further discussions of his needs before God. We do ask that you continue to pray for him, that he might open his heart to the truth and submit himself wholly and truly to the Lord.

### **Member News...**

When the Phillips family moved here a year ago in November, they told us that they would probably only be here for 15 months. The plan was for them to stay for as long as their son was going through treatment in Helena. In January, James completed his time in Helena, and was able to return home. The good news for us is that currently the Phillips family has decided to stay here in Bozeman! We have grown very close to

them over the months, and had hoped that things might work out in a way that they would decide to stay with us, so we are very thankful for their decision. It has been a boost to the work to have them for almost a year and a half, and they have been a big part of the growth we've seen in so many ways over that time. We hope and pray that they will choose to stay here indefinitely. There is certainly much work to continue with!

You may remember James and Jonna Winburn, who worshiped with us about 4 years ago. They were with us for several months, driving to meet with us from Billings (about 150 miles away). They ended up moving to Alabama for a job transfer. Recently, they contacted us to let us know that they are planning to come back to Montana! They convinced James' company to allow them to work out of Bozeman instead of Billings, so they will be local to us and be able to be more involved with the work of the church. We are excited for their return, which they think will be sometime in the next 3 to 6 months. I am confident that they will be great additions to the work once again!

### **Plans...**

When we came to Montana, we said that we planned to stay for at least 5 years, and then we would reevaluate where we were. It is hard for me to believe that we are coming up on that 5 year time frame in July. As Justin and I have evaluated the work and discussed with the brethren here, we are convinced that great things are happening in the Bozeman area. While we would all love to see faster numerical growth, it is evident to us that our work has tremendous value. We continue to be busy with various studies, and it seems we have had more open doors of opportunity in the last few months than most of the time we have been here. We knew when we came that it was going to be a slow and arduous work, but it has been quite rewarding in many ways. As we watch the growth both by those who have come to join us numerically, and the spiritual growth that has taken place among all of the members, we are convinced we are in the right place at the right time. As we consider the future of the work, we are not inclined to put another time frame on the efforts here. As we continue to grow, we will continue to stay and work. Perhaps things will change at some point in the future and cause us to reevaluate, but, if the Lord wills, we will continue to work in this area of Montana to spread the gospel message.

Thank you all so much for your support of our work here. Please continue to pray for our efforts, and especially that the hearts of those with whom we have opportunity to study will be pricked to submit to God's glorious gospel message. May God bless you all in His work in the Kingdom.