

THE BOZEMAN REPORT

March/April 2016

Volume 2, Issue 2



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

Spring has arrived here in the Gallatin Valley. By that, I mean that the rain that is falling today is only partially mixed with snow, and not a full blown snow storm! There will still be a nice new coat of snow topping the Bridger Mountains when this cloud cover lifts. It is a beautiful sight indeed! We have survived our first full winter in Montana, and it was not too severe. We get conflicting reports from the locals, with some saying it was a "normal" winter, while others say it was a "mild" winter. I guess we will just have to see for ourselves over the next few years.

Bible Studies

We are continuing with our regular Bible studies on both Sunday and Wednesday. I am continuing to teach the Gospel of Mark. I had hoped to complete this study by now, but we have had so much good discussion in our classes that it has taken longer than anticipated. When we do finish this study, it is our plan to study the Life and Journeys of the Apostle Paul. I wrote most of the material for that study while still in Huntington, but didn't quite get it finished. I have been working on completing the material, but that too has been a task that has taken longer than I anticipated. I am trying to put together a couple of lessons that cover the life of Paul after the conclusion of the book of Acts. While there are a few biblical clues to Paul's travels, and some events of this latter part of his life, it is far more difficult to put everything into a plausible order. I am hoping to finish this material up in the next few days so that I can print it all out as class books for those who will participate in the class.

Justin is continuing to teach the Wednesday evening study on the book of Jeremiah. This continues to be a great study that Justin has done a good job with. I have been amazed to take note of how many warnings the Lord gave to His people through the prophets, only to be ignored. However, it is also important to realize that the nature of people has not

changed much since the time of Jeremiah! How many warnings are provided by God through His word, and His people today, only to be ignored by the people of the world? If only more people would be willing to heed His warnings...

We continue to use MeetUp as an avenue of trying to get folks to study with us in various locations around town. Justin and I have been having a Bible reading group on Friday mornings, the most consistent of our meet-ups over the last several months. Though we have not had any visitors join us, we continue to hold the discussion group in hopes that eventually some will start attending. We have about 20 people who are now following our group, and that number continues to grow. We are hopeful that eventually we can convert some of that superficial interest into a more substantial interest.

We have not had our study on Bible Authority for a few weeks now. I am hopeful that we will be able to get back to it shortly. With all of the other things we have had going on, I have not had the time to get materials written for the study. We decided that we would put it on hold for a while, so that we could be consistent once we got back to it, rather than having to be sporadic while we prepared materials. I am trying to make sure these lessons are available on our website as they are completed. Lord willing, we will be able to get back to this study within the next couple of weeks. We have had some interest in it from one of the preachers from a local institutional group (which I may have mentioned before). It will be nice to have him continue to study with us!

Travels...

Justin and his family took some time to travel during the month of March. He preached a meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, at the beginning of his trip, and then took some time to visit family and brethren through Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York.

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Average Attendance:

Sunday: 12

Wednesday: 8

I'm sure they enjoyed their time, but we sure were glad to have them home! We did have some visitors that came our way during the time that Justin was gone, which made our assemblies more encouraging. We had a group of 20 show up one Sunday morning, as they were in Big Sky doing some skiing for the week. The next Sunday, a group from Auburn, Alabama, were also in town for a ski trip. We had Ryan Hasty, one of the evangelists in Auburn, speak for us while they were in. We were very encouraged by their visit!

Justin and I had the opportunity, thanks to the generosity of some friends, to travel to the Exton Two Day Study that Jeff Smelser organizes in Exton, PA. We studied the book of Galatians this year. This study has been a great encouragement to me over the last few years, and we were glad that we could make the arrangements to attend again this year. We enjoy being able to get together with the "standard" group of folks that stay at the home of Angelo and Patricia Miozza, and enjoy their wonderful hospitality! We enjoy getting to spend time with them in their home, and spend time with other men who come for the study. This year we got to visit with my parents (David and Patty Brewer), Alan and Barbara Williamson, Chad Lynn (whom I worked with in Huntington), Dale Pennock, Michah Bingham and Michael and Zack Miozza (Angelo and Patricia's sons). I hope everyone there was as edified by our time together as I was!

Good and Bad...

There are always ups and downs in the work of local congregations. As always, I will try to report on both, as they are a part of the reality of the work.

In my last report, I wrote of a family in Whitehall that had found us, and had started meeting with us. I told you that there were some family issues that we would have to work on before they would be able to identify with us. Unfortunately, we were unable to help them resolve their problems. We were able to meet with the whole family (including all the children that are still at home) at the beginning of March. It soon became evident to us that they were not seeking biblical answers to their problems, but rather were looking for us to just tell them that the path they wanted to take was acceptable. We were very clear about the fact that we would not do such a thing, and that we would not condone their worldly solutions and choices. Since meeting with them, we have only heard from them one time, via a text message, basically telling us they were trying to decide what they were going to do in regards to meeting with us. They have evidently made their decision, as we have not seen them any more. In the meeting, we made it clear that they would have to decide if they would follow biblical principles in resolving their problems, and that would dictate their ability to have fellowship with our group. Sadly, they have made the decision that they would rather follow the world's wisdom.

On the positive side, the other couple that we had just met at the writing of my last report have been meeting with us for a couple of months now. James and Jonna Winburn travel from the west side of Billings (nearly 150 miles) to be with us on Sundays. We have now had the opportunity to spend some time with them, and are very excited about working together with them. Justin and I have appreciated James' willingness to jump right in and participate in the assemblies, as that takes some of the burden off us. We get a break from being song leaders now!

Wrapping Up...

It appears that I "jumped the gun" with my opening paragraph of this report. Now, by the time I am finishing up this brief report, the rain has changed over to snow completely, and is accumulating quickly. I am sure it will melt quickly as the temperature is supposed to rise again over the next few days. I guess that just goes to show that the weather can change in a moment here in our valley!

Thank you all so much for your continued encouragement and support of our work. We enjoy hearing from you all!