

March 2018

Dear Praying Friends,

The last two months have been a rollercoaster of emotions. We've experienced the joy of victory and the sting of defeat. We've experienced the euphoria of the mountaintop and the discouragement of the valley. We've felt the heartbreak of losing faithful, growing members and the thrill of watching excited new converts take their place. The extremes have been drastic, but God has been faithful. I love what David said in Psalm 139:8-10 *"If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."* I love the words *"Even there."* There is nowhere we can go that He won't be there to gently take us by the hand and show us the next step.

Ministry Update

Coming off of the Christmas break, the first several weeks of January were pretty rough. Attendance dropped, and a good number of our people who had missed church because of the holidays simply never came back. The Devil was clearly fighting, and it was a rather discouraging time. Nevertheless, on January 16, we launched our first annual New Year's program. We chose the theme "I Want That Mountain." We divided the church into two teams, and our people started to get excited. Many of our people started reading their Bibles faithfully and memorizing Scripture. It took us a couple of weeks to gain traction, but then on Saturday, January 27, everything changed! We took our soul winners to a brand-new area called Palaran. The following day we had 3 first-time visitors come to church from the new area, and then everything just broke loose. Over the next several weeks, we had literally dozens of first-time visitors come from all over Palaran, many of whom have now been baptized and are still faithfully attending church. From that new area, God has given our church a new start and a much-needed "shot in the arm," and we could not be more excited about what God is doing! Please pray that these new converts will continue to grow in their newfound faith.

Family Update

Our family is doing well. God has blessed us with excellent health over the last several months. Right now AJ seems to be developing a cold, but I can't remember the last time anyone else in our family was sick. Please continue to pray for our health. You have no idea what a difference your prayers are making. Beth and Michael are finally starting to make some headway in the Visayan language. Our staff member, Mico Calumba, has begun tutoring them in Visayan three days a week, and he has done a great job! They have learned more in the last several weeks than in the previous six months combined! Ruth and I are also continuing to improve in our Visayan. Ruth has become quite proficient in her Visayan soul-winning plan and is continuing to improve in her day-to-day conversation skills. I am becoming increasingly comfortable with preaching in Visayan, but I am constantly reminded of just how far I still have to go. There are still many times when I feel so limited in my ability to express the truths that our people so desperately need to understand. Please pray that God would continue to bless our efforts as we seek to truly master the Visayan language. Thank you for your prayers and faithful support.

Dividends on Your Investment

This story actually began last October on the last Sunday of the month when a young lady named Gem walked into our church for the first time. No one had invited her; she just saw the sign and decided to visit. After the service, I learned that she was married to a police officer named Arnold. A couple of weeks later, I went to visit Gem and Arnold. I knew that Gem had some church background, but I wanted to make sure that she and Arnold were saved. When my partner and I arrived at their home, Arnold was on duty, but Gem was home, and she invited us to sit down on the front porch. After a few minutes, I was able to steer the conversation towards the Gospel, and I learned that Gem was unsure of her salvation. In spite of attending a "Born Again" church in another city, she was still trusting in her own good works for her salvation. For the next 45 minutes, I had the privilege of clearly explaining to her that Christ had already fully paid for her sins and that she no longer had to pay. When I finished explaining the Gospel, Gem bowed her head and sweetly trusted Christ alone as her Saviour.

The following week I went back to follow up on Gem and try to witness to Arnold, but when my partner and I reached their home, we learned that Gem had been hospitalized with the measles. We went to the hospital, found her room, and were thrilled to discover that Arnold was there with her. There in Gem's hospital room, I had the privilege of leading Arnold to Christ as well! A couple of months later on Sunday, February 4, Arnold and Gem both chose to follow the Lord in believer's baptism!

A few weeks later, Ruth and I took the kids to visit Arnold and Gem on a Sunday night after the evening service. The following day was Arnold's birthday, and Gem's entire immediate family was in town for the celebration. They invited us in and insisted that we join them for dinner. While we were eating, Gem turned to me and said, "Pastor Mike, I told my mom what you told me about going to Heaven, and she wants you to tell her too." She quickly added, "If you don't mind." I tried not to chuckle as I assured her that I would love to talk to her mom and the rest of the family too! After dinner I took my Bible, and Gem's entire family sat down to listen as I carefully explained the Gospel. About 30 minutes later, Gem's father, mother, brother, and sister all bowed their heads and put their faith in Jesus Christ!

Yours for souls,


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Missionaries to the Philippines

"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." 1 Corinthians 16:9

