



To Every Tribe

Jesus is worth it

Dear Brethren, Family, and Friends,

August 2, 2009

Our team just returned from six days in Emiliano Zapata (E.Z.), the small farming town in Tamaulipas, Mexico, where we've been ministering throughout this year. To Every Tribe students and To Every Tribe Mexico missionaries teamed up with a group of sixteen Christians from Kerrville Bible Church in Texas. Kerrville planned a full week of Vacation Bible School (VBS) for children of all ages. Their theme was Creation to Christ, the very same thing we wished to present to the adults (God coordinated that, not us). To Every Tribe students planned adult lessons for the evenings. Michele Petracco led a woman's study each evening followed by preaching by the five male students (including me). We planned a series that would give them an overview of the whole Old Testament and then would show that the whole of Scripture points to Jesus Christ (John 1:45; Acts 10:42-43). I presented "The Person of God" Sunday night to a group of about 25. We looked at God's attributes and nature. This was followed by Scott Ronyak's presentation on Creation. Monday night Alex Sisson taught on the Fall of Man, and Caleb Sturgis taught on the Flood and Tower of Babel. On Tuesday Scott presented Abraham and Isaac, focusing on the offering of Isaac and the substitute ram. Ruben Ibanez also taught about Jacob and Joseph. On Wednesday Alex told the story of Moses, focusing on the Passover, and I presented a quick overview of the prophets and examined the Messianic prophecies, showing that they were fulfilled in Christ. Did you know that mathematicians have estimated that the probability of any person fulfilling just 8 out of the 61 specific prophecies about the Messiah is 1×10^{17} ? That means that there was a 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 chance for Jesus of Nazareth to fulfill eight of the prophecies that were written hundreds of years before He lived on earth! The Mexicans we met were shocked by that number. On Thursday Ruben and Caleb looked back at all the stories we presented showing that Jesus is the true Deliverer and Savior of men. Each night more and more residents came out to hear. We had excellent Christian interpreters for the lessons and for all of our work during the week. There is no good way to measure the success of this ministry, but we were told that more people came out for this teaching than had ever come out before. Praise God!



Juan Espinosa, E.Z. resident and believer hearing our teaching.



Hanging out with youth at the school.

During VBS I talked with some teens and presented the gospel to them over a couple of days. I worked with two boys in particular who came to the VBS from another town where they attend church. I was surprised at how little they knew about God and how limited their understanding was regarding the gospel. Scott and I also met with the only known Christians in the town, a lovely couple of great prominence in E.Z., to disciple them. They were so appreciative! Each day there were big soccer games and we played with stilts that the church group had made. We also divided the town into quadrants and visited each house at least once. I took a ride to the coast to visit a family with my friend Chris Johnson, one of the Mexico missionaries, and got to see what a small fishing village looks like. We also had lunch there.



Chris, Ruben, and I visited Mina in Las Higorillas. Pray for her son, Francisco, who was severely injured by a boat propeller during a fishing accident.



Our home for the week!

In E.Z. we stayed on the school property in tents and used the small school house for meal preparation. We had an outhouse close by and took bucket showers. God gave us an almost constant wind that protected us from the high temperatures and bugs. My tent was battered beyond repair by the end of the trip.

Leanne and the girls stayed home on this trip. It was a good thing since they all got a 24-hour stomach flu. This illness had spread to everyone on campus by the time we returned from the trip, and it is still infecting people, so please pray for it to go away quickly as we finish the last couple weeks of classes. This week we study ministry to Muslims, and then we have seven days of studying the book of Hebrews.

We ask for prayer for direction for us during the time before we go to live in Papua New Guinea. There are several options we're considering and many that we're not aware of, I'm sure. We pray for a team to go to PNG with and that God will use us to glorify Himself wherever we are. God bless you all!

Love in Christ,

Matt for all of us

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